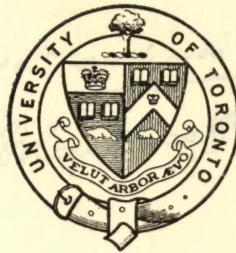


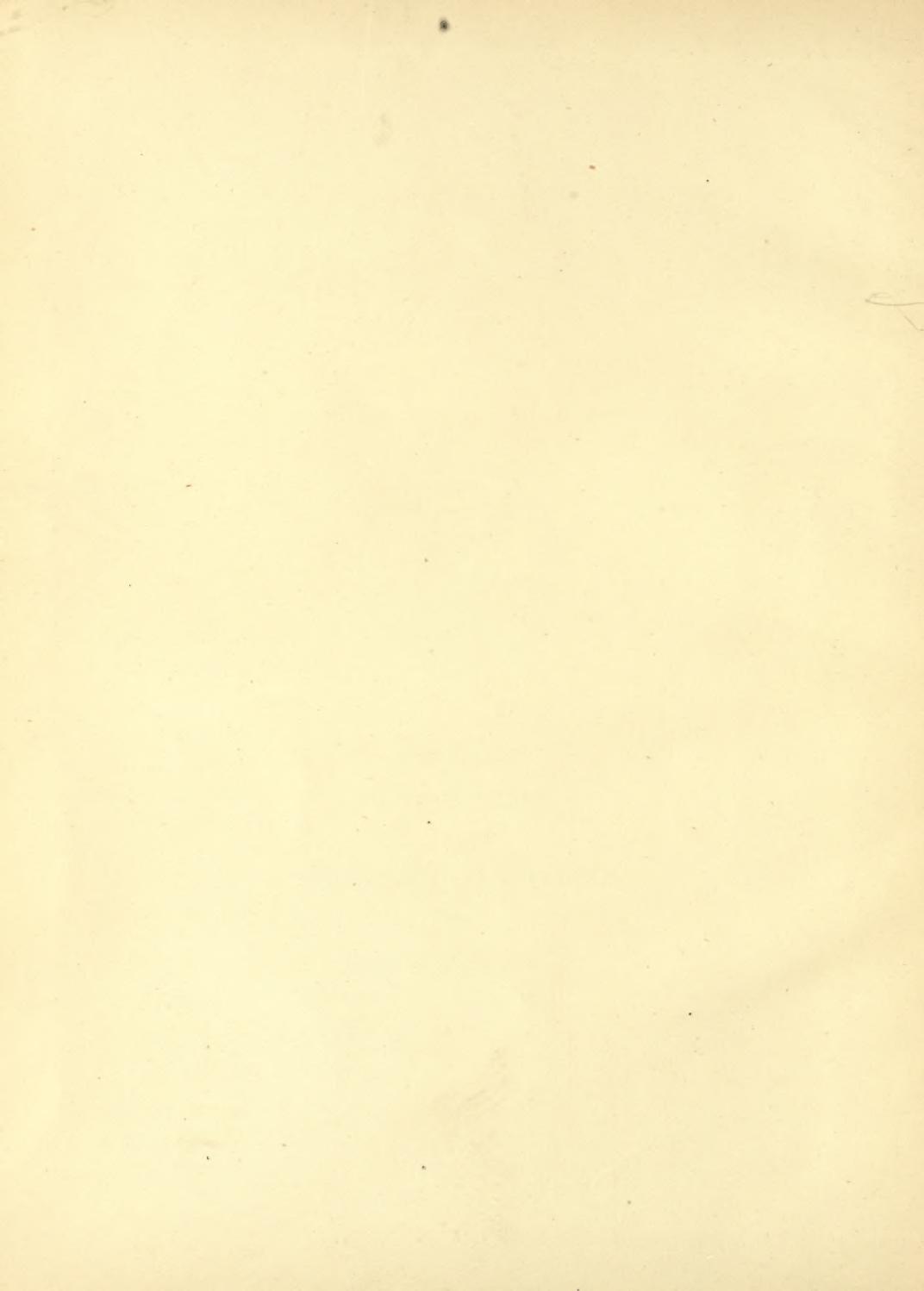
RIVER SAND AND SUN.

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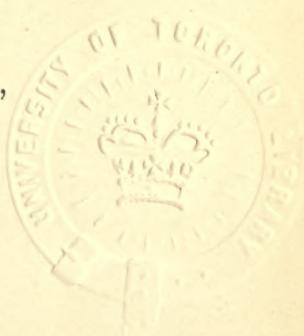
Street Scene in Cairo.

RIVER, SAND, AND SUN.

BEING SKETCHES
OF THE
C.M.S. EGYPT MISSION.

BY
MINNA C. GOLLOCK.

LONDON :
CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE,
SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.
1906.
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To

E. B. B.,

WHO HAS BEEN AS A MOTHER IN EGYPT

FOR MANY YEARS, NOT ONLY TO THE GIRLS IN THE

BAB-EL-LUK SCHOOL,

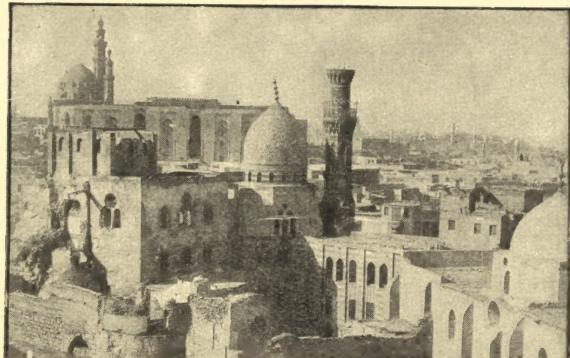
BUT ALSO TO

THE AUTHOR.

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View of Cairo.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE following chapters are an imperfect and informal record of the work of the Church Missionary Society in Egypt as seen during winter visits made on three different occasions, covering in all a period of eleven months. No one is better aware than the writer how inadequately they represent the spiritual conditions and spiritual needs of that country of surpassing interest. No attempt has been made to portray the work of other missionary agencies, but perhaps it is not too much to hope that through reading these simple pages missionary sympathy may be called out for all those who are spreading the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in a land where once it reigned supreme. If one Society should be named more than another it is the American Presbyterian Mission, which has worked on a larger scale than any other in Egypt for fifty years.

Sincere thanks are due to those friends who have generously contributed the illustrations. Amongst them are:—Mrs. Edwards, Miss Bywater, Miss Warburton, Miss G. A. Western, Hugh Taylor Brown, Esq., Sydney Halifax, Esq., and the Rev. Rennie MacInnes. To Mr. MacInnes is due also a hearty acknowledgment for

the supplementary chapter which he has written, giving personal information concerning work done among men and boys, which it is impossible for a woman to gain in a Moslem land.

Need it be said that the closer the contact, the deeper the conviction that Foreign Missions and foreign missionaries deserve the fullest and most earnest support? Where this conviction is lacking the presumption is strong that the requisite knowledge is lacking also. If this little book should help even a few others to understand what is transparently clear to its writer, it will not have wholly missed the mark.

M. C. G.

WIMBLEDON.

August, 1905.



Fetching Water.

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RIVER,
SAND,
AND SUN.



A Nile Boat.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIVER.

RIVER, Sand, and Sun are three Egyptian neighbours: they are indeed more than this, for River, Sand, and Sun are Egypt.

If a river could be hoary with age it would be the River Nile, but since one river can be no older than another, the claim which the Nile makes to old age—a claim conceded by every one—is due to the stream of History which has ever flowed along beside and between its venerable banks. Even to-day the Nile is as busy making modern history as it ever was in distant times making what is now ancient history, and, so far as man can see, the Nile and its banks will be one of the most important history-making parts of the earth in coming days, for the old river is not ‘played out’; it is as young as it is old.

In far-back days think of the people who looked on it, drank of it,

and were carried by it. Abraham knew it, doubtless, when he went to Egypt with Sarah his wife, and after he had left the country again, God fixed 'the River of Egypt' as one of the boundaries of the possession of his descendants. Lot, Abraham's nephew, chose to live in the plain of Jordan because it was 'well watered . . . like the land of Egypt,' so perhaps he too had gone to Egypt with his uncle, and himself had seen how the water from the Nile was conveyed in canals to all the fields. Pharaoh in his dream thought he stood 'by the Nile' and saw the kine coming up from feeding in the reeds—reeds such as those which grow to-day in many a patch. Joseph, interpreting the monarch's dream, rose in consequence to high position in the land, and, fulfilling God's purpose, used his fore-thought to provide against the coming famine. Boat after boat, high-prowed, high-sailed, laden with the precious corn, was borne along on the grand water-way during the years of plenty to unlade its treasure at the great store-houses: what the water of the river produced the current of the river conveyed.

Then in the lifetime of another great man the river flowed through sadder scenes. It had first carried him gently, a helpless little child, as he lay in his ark of bulrushes; it had swept him in among the yielding flags, which did not grow too thickly to hinder loving eyes from seeing 'afar off' what was happening; it supported him, till the princess, taking her walk, rescued him and brought him home. Long years afterwards, when many changes had come, the same child had a strange power given him over the same river. Moses, at the word and the will of God, turned the river into blood, and not the river only, but the 'canals,' 'the pools,' and 'the ponds of water.' That was a dark, dark day in the land of Egypt, 'for all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river.'

The story of God's people, the Hebrews, descendants of Jacob and his sons, occupies only a very small part of the history of the Nile—a section pregnant with teaching. It is inserted in the long story of the great range of Pagan rulers and Pagan religion in Egypt, stretching backward till lost in prehistoric haze; and, after the

Exodus, succeeded by further Pagan rule, magnificence, and corruption, reaching on to the period of Persian domination in Egypt, to the Greek period, and the Roman period, for Egypt was ever a stage on which many players played their parts from the East, the West, and the South. But into this, the later history of Egypt and its river, God inserted yet another and a unique piece of history.

On the
Banks of the
Nile.



Another helpless Child, given, as Moses was before Him, to be a Leader and a Commander of the people, entered the land, and even

though but a fugitive, this Holy Child brought ANNO DOMINI to the ancient country, and a new reckoning for all time was founded in the land of oldest history. Again, after His ‘precious death’ on Calvary, His messenger returned in the power of His Spirit, and before this teaching Paganism paled away, and a Christian Church was founded in the land. Chiefly under Roman influences, and also for political reasons, there fell bitter persecutions on this Christian Church, for the early Church of Egypt passed through persecution as



A majestic Temple Ruin.

great as, if not greater than, any other, and the noble army of martyrs has drawn some of its largest contingents from the land of the Nile. The new religion stood, however; but some seven hundred years after the birth of Christ came yet another wave of change, and into the land swept the Mohammedan invasion under the leadership of the Khalif 'Omar. By degrees the sword of the Prophet cut down the stem and branches of the Tree of Christ—but never the root,—and now for eleven hundred years the faith of Islam has prevailed, and the remnant of that early Christian Church, the Coptic Church, is small in number.

Modern nations, like the Romans, Greeks, and Persians, have placed their hands on Egypt, and many races and rulers have borne influence there with varying success, but never has Mohammedanism been weakened in its hold nor lost its deadening force on the land or the people: in the midst of changes social and political, that remains.

Still the old river, unchanged, undeviating, flows steadily on, rising and falling with perpetual regularity season by season; its character

now effectually established in the world's history. On it goes, past a majestic temple-ruin dating perhaps from Abraham's time, beneath the walls of a modern sugar or cotton factory with its hideous black smoke, the latest trade-mark of modern Egypt; now narrowed between steep banks of rock, now spreading widely between low banks surmounted with graceful palms. Stately in its age, this river has learned, as has no other, to catch the colours of the sky and to give them back again, sometimes the coolest silver, sometimes the darkest red, sometimes blue as the sea ; and then on those rarer days when there is no special light from above to reflect, the river shows its own wealth by throwing out its own dull, silky-brown colour—brown because its waters are rich with all the precious morsels of sand and mud it is carrying along.

If the history of the Nile has a fascination, so also has its geography, for till comparatively recent years its source was unknown and its two main branches unexplored.

This mystery of the Nile has caught the sculptor's fancy as well as stirred the explorer's zeal. In the Piazza Navona in Rome there is a well-known fountain designed by Bernini in the middle of the seventeenth century to represent four great rivers, the Danube, the Ganges, the La Plata, and the Nile. Four human figures with varied surroundings represent the four rivers, but in the case of the Nile the head of the old man who reclines by a palm-tree is veiled and the features obscured, conveying the idea of secrecy ; the other figures have unveiled faces.

But now at last the Nile has



**Carrying loaded Water-skins up a Bank
of the River.**

given up its secret, and from source to sea it runs its explored marvellous course of three thousand five hundred miles, which is a distance equal to one-seventh of the circumference of the world. It ranks with the Amazon and the Congo as one of the longest rivers in the world ; its head-waters are to the south of the Equator, and it flows into the Mediterranean Sea thirty-two degrees to the north.

The discovery of the source or sources of the Nile explains another mystery in connexion with it. At a certain period of the year the Nile has always begun to rise steadily ; for several weeks this rise continues, then again it as steadily falls and returns to its former level. The cause for this is now ascertained.

Going in thought from north to south along the Nile, we reach the Atbara River, some twelve hundred miles from the Mediterranean : for all this distance the Nile does not receive any other tributary, and it flows through an almost totally rainless district. At Khartoum—some hundred and fifty miles farther south—we find that there are two branches of the river which meet there, and which are known respectively as the Blue and the White Nile. Following on up the course of the Blue Nile we find that it has its rise in the high mountains of Abyssinia ; following up the White Nile we find that it has its source in the great Central African Lakes—Victoria Nyanza, Albert Nyanza, and Albert Edward Nyanza. The White Nile also receives an important tributary, the Sobat River, which, like the Blue Nile, has its source in the mountains of Abyssinia.

Among these Abyssinian mountains and highlands at certain seasons of the year there are violent storms of rain, which force great floods down the rivers which drain the region : these storms are responsible for the annual rise in the Nile. On the other hand, the source of the White Nile in the great African Lake district is right within the tropics, where rain falls frequently and copiously, and it is this great branch, the main branch of the river, which keeps up the constant supply and enables the river to flow on steadily through the rainless regions of the north. It certainly is a romantic river, with its regular and its intermittent volume of water.

This annual rise and fall of the river is of vital importance to



The Nilometer.

Egypt, in fact without it the greater part of the country would be as barren as a slate-quarry, for upon it depends the whole system of irrigation. The Nile begins to rise at Assuan, in Upper Egypt, in May, and in June the flood has reached Cairo; it is at its highest in Assuan in the middle of September, and in Cairo in October. After that the river falls again till it reaches its lowest level in the early summer, because the violent rains nearly four thousand miles away have ceased to fall and the swift current has spent itself. The official measurements of the rise and fall of the Nile at Cairo are made in the Nilometer, which dates from 716 A.D.; it is a well with an octagonal column in the centre, on which are inscribed ancient Arabic measurements, and it is situated in a garden at the southern end of the island of Roda.

As the Nile for the greater part of its course through Egypt flows between mud banks, and as at the time of flood it is at a far higher level than the land behind them, it is comparatively easy to arrange to let the water over the land. Those who rule or administer in Egypt try year after year to increase the area watered and to store

up the water itself so that none of it may be wasted. For this reason great dams, or barrages, have been built across the Nile near Cairo, at Assiut, and at Assuan ; these hold up the water and also regulate its outflow through great sluices into the various canals, according to the height of the water in the river at the time. The Nile flood is considered ‘poor’ if it only rises about twenty-one feet at Assuan ; it is considered ‘good’ if it rises twenty-seven feet ; and it is considered ‘dangerous’ if it rises thirty feet, because then there is risk that banks will be washed away and the surface of the fields swept off.

The wealth of this old river is simply fabulous, and all the wealth is lavished on the lands it touches. It is not the water alone that is of value to parched lands under a burning sun, but what the water holds in suspense. If we have to thank the White Nile for the strong volume it always pours down, we have to thank the Blue Nile and the Atbara for the rich mud which they wash down in their violent descent from Abyssinia. This deposit, when spread over the soil of Egypt, makes it so abundantly fertile. Ordinarily we admire most those glorious clear rivers down into whose depths we can see, wondering whether to call them green or blue ; but no river in the world is like this old brown river, thick and muddy from all its spoils ; no river has such a destiny ; no river performs such a task.

What does it do ? Well, in order to understand, suppose we stand in thought for a few moments on some high spot on the eastern bank of the Nile—say the Citadel of Cairo—or on top of the Great Pyramid on the west bank, and let our eyes run north and south to the very horizon. Whether the gleam of the river can be seen or not through the palm-groves, the long strip of green verdure—the freshest of green—will mark the river’s course on either side. In some parts the strip is narrow, perhaps not more than two or three miles wide ; in others there is an expanse some ten miles across, but be the strip narrow or wide, where its borders end abruptly, the desert begins abruptly. Wherever the wealth-laden waters have been conveyed there is life, wherever they have

not, there is desert. The green strip is Egypt; the barren lands flanking it on either side are the Arabian and Libyan deserts, and though certain portions of these are politically considered as under the Khedive of Egypt, yet, in reality, Egypt is a strip of narrow green produced by the waters of the Nile. *Is it any wonder that the river is the life of the land?*



Kasr el Nil (Swing Bridge).



A Desert Herdsman.

this, for the desert sand of Egypt is the substance on which the Nile can work its greatest miracle, and the sand expanses of Egypt can also work their own miracles of teaching and healing on all who will trust them enough to know them. The desert of Egypt is a dry ocean divided by the old river. It has its own waves, its own hollows, its own caves, its own untrodden ways, its own inhabitants, and its own frenzied storms. It has its own individuality, and if it cannot be said that we may know it as a person, we can certainly know it as a thing, and get to understand it too.

Its immensity impresses you first : mile after mile its gentle billows of soft sand will stretch away to the horizon, or tier upon tier of jagged, low, flat-topped hills will strike up into the blue sky. A line of cliffs, against which it seems the waves must still be breaking, will jut out into the plain ; a mysterious dip in the surface of the ground will suggest some great expanse, perhaps of water. The morning light will bring out some weird outlines, the evening light others, and the desert will remain as changing and as changeless as the ocean itself.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAND AND THE SUN.

WE must alter our idea of deserts if we are ever to understand Egypt. To most of us a desert has so deep a sense of gloom that we only think of it as a place to be lost in first and then to die in after, parched by thirst. But a desert with such a neighbour as the Nile is not like

Then what ranges of colour will become familiar! The white cliffs may have orange streaks, or the black cliffs may only have blacker shadows; the fine golden sand will merge into the softest, coolest brown, and where the greys and the whites and the browns might become crude and harsh, there plays over them all the blue, milky, opal light of Egypt. Again, we find in the desert deep torrent-beds; for century upon century no water has flowed down them, and yet there are the water-worn marks as plainly left as if it were but yesterday the flood had passed; and perhaps in reverence to the memory of the past, there struggle to live and succeed, tiny little desert plants which give just a shade of green, most familiar of all colours, to the desert tones.

There seems to be no life in the desert in the daytime, and



'A line of cliffs . . . will jut out into the plain.'

in the strong light such is certainly hard to see, but a little bird, perhaps the homelike swallow resting in his flight, will suddenly alight, as many another bird also. The vulture or the eagle, too, may be there ; the jackal will certainly be there when darkness falls, and the gentle hare by day. Or, in the distance, unexpectedly the desert goat-herd may lead his flock along, a Bedouin perhaps, wild and shy as his charges, and disliking notice ; his goats will move with celerity and apparently find much satisfying food among the stones, acting as if deserts were made specially to give pleasure to the goat family —the same pleasure that stepping-stones give to English villagers.

But the desert has greater charms than these. If it could speak but one word it would say—‘ Hush ! ’ Long, long ago a shepherd, and perhaps a goat-herd, who was in the back of the desert was told, ‘ Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,’ and then the presence of God was revealed to him. You wish to be alone in the desert, its solitude does not oppress you, for you remember that the poet has said,—

‘ God is in the desert, now and heretofore.’



A Desert Torrent-bed, dry for Centuries.



'The Desert Goat-herd may lead his Flock.'

And you are there to listen and to learn. In the silence, the vastness, the shimmering light, the strong heat, you learn that God's presence in its eternal rest is being manifested and you are drawn very near to Him. As you wait, a cool air from the four winds touches your face, and a consciousness of life takes the place of listening. Fresh as from another world it comes, and while the sun shines burningly on there is life all round, and thought is driven outwards to fasten on the living out unselfishly of human life after the breathing in of what is divine. And then perhaps a string of laden camels, patiently plodding along the track their own soft feet have pounded down for years, comes into sight and calls out a new purpose. For the desert sands of Egypt are not to be contemplated for their beauty alone, but to be reclaimed for their great possibilities.

If the rocky *wadi*, or valleys, and the flat-topped hills and jagged

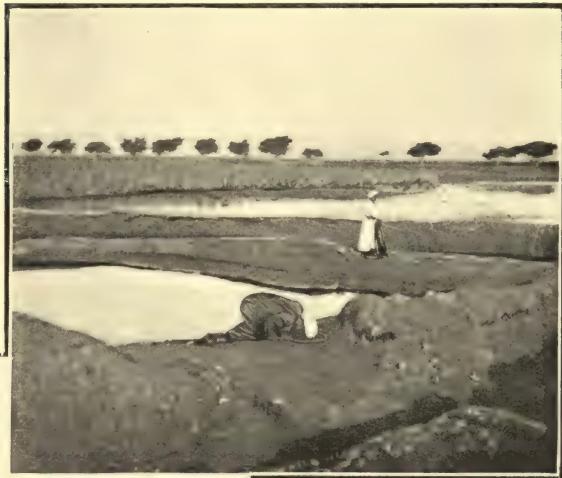
cliffs must ever be kept as temples of God's silence, not so the flat expanses stretching beneath and between. Could the water be carried there, fertility and life would burst up. For century after century the old river has been pouring down between its sand-bounded banks, and when at flood-times or by any artificial processes it has reached new expanses and has poured over them, it has left behind on all the sand it covered the deposit of precious mud—how strange the noun and its adjective sound together!—rich beyond comparison. The wealth that the water held remains when the water ebbs, and the mud of the Nile on the sand of Egypt make the richest soil in the world. The simple practical methods of irrigation and engineering skill go far to bring in that aspect of the millennium when 'the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' God has provided the river and the sand, and He has provided man with intellect to bring the two together.

There are two chief methods and several lesser ones for watering the land of Egypt. The chief methods are called annual or basin irrigation, and perennial irrigation. In Upper Egypt, and in a few parts of Lower Egypt, basin irrigation is employed. Here the land is divided into districts, separated from one another by embankments from eight to ten feet high; some of these basins have an area of



A Halt in the Desert.

Flooded Land
at
Sunset.



'The Embankments
between the
Basins serve as
Causeways.'

six hundred acres, and some an area of fifty thousand acres. When the river is in flood the water is allowed to flow into these basins by means of canals, till it covers the ground to a depth of four feet. The country then looks like a great lake; the villages near the basins, or those built on some mound in the basins, look very pretty with the water all round them.

The embankments between the basins serve as causeways leading to the villages, and the peasants, their camels, donkeys, goats, and geese pass to and fro along them. The water lies on the land for forty



A Village surrounded by Water.

days till the ground is thoroughly saturated, and then it is allowed to run off again by means of drains to some point lower down the river. The water is let into these basins during August and begins to be drained off in October; during November the seed is sown in the rich, soft mud. When the

crop has been grown and gathered the farmer has to wait until the next annual inundation before he can sow another crop.

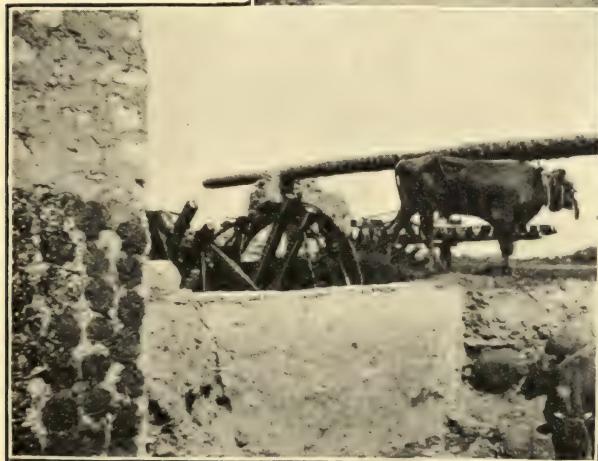
Perennial inundation is quite different from this; by its means water is conveyed all the year round to all the land which is not included in the basins. It is first diverted from the river into big canals, so large as to be like rivers themselves; from these it is passed into smaller canals, from them to channels, and finally into tiny trenches which sub-divide the fields into squares like chess-boards. The water in the large canals has to be raised to the level of the fields by means (nowadays) of steam pumps, and also by the time-worn methods of the *sakkia*, or water-wheel worked by oxen, and also by the *shadif*, which is worked by hand and is the most laborious method of all. There has to be much careful tending and planning to keep the fields adequately watered, for the water is precious and the fields are fertile. At the right moment in the preparation of a field or in the growth of a crop, the water is turned from the channel into the trench, and the farmer comes along with his quaint little hoe and breaks down the earth wall of the trench and the water trickles out quietly over the field, finds its way to every blade and every root, and does its own silent, life-producing work.

The Delta, that part of Egypt lying north of Cairo, where the Nile divides into two great branches once more, and where the cultivated land between them spreads out like a beauteous green fan, is all watered by the perennial system.

In this way it is that the long, mighty river at last reaches the sand by means of a network of water-threads. What hope springs up for the sandy regions when we think of the living spots of green growth!

It is very puzzling to know where to begin about the third member

Raising
Water for
Irrigating the
Land.



A 'Sakkia'
worked by
Oxen.



A 'Shaduf.'

of the Egyptian triad—finest and greatest of all because farthest removed and least of earth—the sun. Early in the morning he slowly fights his way over the Arabian Desert in the east ; he lights it up first to announce his coming, he drives off the darkness near him, and makes deep purple belts along the western horizon, and as the gold brightens in the east the purple deepens in the west. Then the sun throws a ray on one of the old Pyramids on the edge of the Libyan Desert, and out of the purple its rigid triangular shape appears : then he lights up the snow-white sail of a boat on the river, and then the dark-green palm-trees on the bank stand out, grove after grove. Even as you notice these things in detail the purple gloom all disappears and the cool, clear grey of the early morning has come, for the sun is 'up.'

On he goes all day, waxing hotter and hotter, doing his mighty work, drawing the plants out of the ground, ripening the crops, pouring light into loathsome

places, falling on hideousness and filth, and purifying, healing everywhere. Then he blends with the cold, keen air of the desert, mellowing it into the life-giving 'hot frost' of Egypt which is health and cure to those who breathe it.

As the evening comes his task is nearly done. There is no fight with the darkness now, he lets it have its way. He slowly—with the slowness of limitless might—sinks down in a very glory of crimson light beyond the Libyan Hills, and even after he himself has gone he sends up his rays to gild the overhanging clouds with vivid colour, as if to remind the land he would assuredly light up the East

next morning as now he lights the West. And one silver star comes calmly out high up, and looks down into that molten vault, and sees the last of the wondrous setting. The purple gathers in the East and mingles with the silver of the North and the South and spreads as the western light, flushing for one instant into green, fades away ; and the evening star is joined by myriads of others, and the day is done.

Oh, the wonder of it all—wonder of beauty, wonder of teaching : the mighty river ; the dry sand ; the glorious sun. What is their message ?



Evening.



Chapter III. THE MESSAGE OF THE SAND.

IT is thousands of years since God in His Holy Word first compared people in their multitude to sand. Nowhere more than in Egypt are this and its sister simile for multitude—the stars of Heaven—so conspicuous. The boundless brown desert stretches away beneath the feet, composed of grains innumerable, and the arched inky sky above the head glitters with lights unnumbered, and the mystery of multitude spreads round in the stillness of an Egyptian night. Whether thought goes out to the stars as units and to the sand as several grains, or whether to the stars as composing 'the heavens' and the grains as forming the desert, the similes remain intact; the one is multitude in detail, the other multitude in mass; each star, each grain has its own particular place and its own particular relation to other stars and other grains.

The message of the sand, then, is multitude. The population of Egypt is not in itself great, being only some nine and three-quarter millions of inhabitants,* but taken in conjunction with the area in which the people live, it is perhaps the most remarkable in the world. Almost the entire population of Egypt lives in the strip of cultivated land bordering the Nile and in the Delta, the area of both being about twelve thousand square miles; accordingly there are about nine hundred and thirty human beings to each square mile. If, however, we exclude the wandering population, we find that some seven hundred and fifty persons, forming the settled population, actually go to each square mile. This is a record which no other country in the world can approach for multitude. China, for instance, the most densely populated country in Asia, has a population of two hundred and forty to the square mile; Belgium, the most densely populated country in Europe, has a population of five hundred and twenty to the square mile; England, with all its vast centres of manufacture and industry, has a population of three hundred and thirty to the square mile.

That we may better understand this multitude of Egypt, we shall, treating it as sand, divide it into five piles, representing different classes—social, racial, and religious.

The *fellahin*, or peasant class, is by far the largest, as it comprises quite two-thirds of the entire population. Agriculture is the wealth of Egypt, for there is no coal or iron to be found, such as would give it manufacturing importance, and the *fellahin*, living in villages, are the agriculturalists of Egypt.

Pretty white cottages thatched with straw, or sturdy homesteads with busy farmyards, have no place in the agriculture of Egypt. The villages are made of mud-built houses, huddled together in hopeless confusion, and the peasants who live in them are hopelessly huddled together too. They themselves, their wives, their children, their camels, donkeys, black and brown goats, geese, turkeys, fowls, and pigeons share the uncleanness of the mud house. Perhaps in a better-class village the houses may be built of sun-

* Census of 1897 ; but there is a considerable increase since.

dried mud bricks, but in others the mud seems to have been chiefly daubed together. Always, however, the roofs are flat; in the poorest villages the houses have only one storey, and on to the flat tops of these all manner of refuse is cast: dried stalks of Indian corn, sugar-canies, broken pottery, old paraffin tins, old garments, and to be discarded at all means in Egypt a *really* old garment. Windowless hovels are these, airless and filthy, with nothing whatever in them to redeem the pitiable squalor, except perhaps the pigeons. A gentle cooing, or the gleam of a white wing, or soft grey head peeping out, speak of better things somehow, and *anything* with innate beauty is intensified because of the surroundings. Even a foetid pool, so often seen in a village, thick with green slime and speaking of deadly fevers, is transformed by the presence of a radiant kingfisher flitting about its edge.

How the children and the dogs swarm in a village! Both alike are dusty and dirty, both quarrelsome and forgiving, both looking as if it would be very difficult to make them better than they are, alike the victims of neglect. One would not have imagined that even an Egyptian village child could live at all in its dirty condition, nor would one have dreamed that even an Egyptian dog could have fed on any refuse considered fit to throw away. But just as piles of stones and thorn-bushes seem to nourish Egyptian goats, so the village children and the village dogs live in some mysterious way.

The village is fairly quiet in the daytime; the men are mostly in the fields or plying their trades; the women wash clothes by the river's brink, in the canal, or even in the pool, for water is water in Egypt, and the quality of the water scarcely comes in! The boys are perhaps away, squatting about in a corn-field at the village *kuttab*, or school, there being taught, usually by a blind teacher, a very elementary form of reading and writing, and the recitation of certain portions of the Koran. Most of them wear the brown felt skull-cap of the *fellaḥîn*, which is utterly unlike the smart red *tarbûsh* of the town-dwellers. The little girls, and perhaps some of the older women unfit for other labour, make with their hands flat,

thin cakes of fuel out of cattle manure, which they scrape together, mix with dried leaves and any other refuse, and press out carefully to dry in the sun. This is the chief fuel of the *fellahîn* in Egypt, for neither wood nor coal is available, and it gives off an acrid smoke, whose only redeeming quality is its bright blue colour. Towards sunset a change comes in the village ; the fires are lit for the evening meal, and the level rays of the sun, striking it may be through the stems of a palm-grove, light up the dull brown walls and severe outlines, and turn, with the magic of the East, the squalid reality into a beautiful picture. The village women, in their black dresses (some, if they are of a better class, with their long black veils as well, but being villagers the great majority



The Village 'Kuttab' or School.

are unveiled), move to their duties, and the labourers of the day return.

The high embankment winding through the cultivated fields on either side is alive with pretty groups. Here a stately camel comes mincingly home with a bulging load of luscious green clover ; there a camel who has lost his temper (a frequent occurrence !) screams out his angry remonstrances at being asked to lie down to be unloaded. On comes a flock of ridiculously mischievous-looking goats, led by one solemn little girl in black and followed by another, while two black and white kids with numberless antics jump up and down on the sooty back of an old buffalo, who has long since forgotten his youth, and only wishes to be allowed to lie in quietness while he munches his food after yet one more weary day's labour.

Along the embankment, right in the middle, ambles a donkey without bridle or saddle, obedient to the voice and touch of his master, whose flowing robes, swinging feet, and haughty stare proclaim him to be a *fellaḥ* of great importance. His thick, bull-like neck, his square shoulders, his coarse features all show that the Prophet's teaching of the superiority of men to women was congenial to the Arab race. Behind him come other *fellaḥīn*, labour-worn men, hungry after spending a long day in the fields, and with legs coated thick with mud above the knees from wading in the irrigated land. Near by in the muddy canal a fisherman flings out his draw-net rapidly to catch the muddy fish ; all move with haste, for there is no twilight in Egypt.

Prettiest sight of all in the village evening, while some of the men sit in their doorways and, by the waning light, busily spin black or white wool, a string of women and girls set off to draw water for the evening meal, and return with the heavy water-jars gracefully balanced on their heads. And though this labour is too hard for any woman, yet the dignity and grace of bearing which comes to the *fellaḥa*, or peasant woman, is most remarkable. It is the last task of the day, and 'darkness falls' on the village. What kind of darkness one well may ask, and with no uncertainty, suspect : there is darkness that is worse than the disappearance of the sun.

'Going to bed' is no doubt a simple process in a village; presumably it is as simple as 'getting up.' The latter act can be seen, and from it one can guess the going to bed process. 'Getting up' consists in rolling off a quilt spread on the floor, fully dressed in day clothing. Therefore going to bed is lying down in the same condition. When a whole family lives like this the consequences are bad, and the simplicity does not outweigh the dirt and the degradation.



A 'Fellah'
ploughing with
Oxen.

Planting the Cotton.



So common is the loss of eyesight from dirt and other insanitary causes in Egypt that the Government has commenced here and there to erect 'model' houses, lest the nation should become a blind nation, but the effect of this is infinitesimally small in the multitude of Egypt. Also, we must remember that with a sun so powerful and purifying, and with the intense dryness of air and absence of damp and rain, the Egyptians live as much outside as inside their hovels; accordingly, we could not compare their state justly with the state of peasants living in similar dwellings, say, in England.

But when all that is most hopeful is said, the worst is not realized.

Here is this vast pile of *fellaḥîn* ‘sand,’ year in, year out, digging in their fields, ploughing with their oxen, planting the cotton, tending the cattle, watching for the Nile to rise, raising the sluices to let the waters into their fields, working up water by the *shadûf* from the trenches, gathering in the crops, and on and on in the same round year after year, as their fathers did so do they. And human life with all its miseries and cruelties, and its pleasures and its kindnesses, is



A Soudanese Girl.

being lived out in these villages, and yet, WE KNOW, there are scarcely any persons in Egypt systematically telling the *fellaḥîn* in their villages that God the Father knows them one from the other, sees into their villages, cares for their needs; and that the Son of God died for them in His love, and that the Spirit of God can enlighten them all. Dry sand they are till this is done.

Most noticeable in the sand piles of Egypt next to the *fellaḥîn*, and differing racially from them, though of the same religion, are the



1.—More Water wanted. 2.—A Bisharin Arab. 3.—Riverside Types.

really 'black' people, Nubians, Berbers, and the Soudanese. Since the Mohammedan invasion, Arabs have overrun Egypt, and the modern Egyptian is commonly and correctly (in a racial sense) called an Arab. He is dark-skinned, but not 'black.' The Nubians, however, are not Egyptians ; they come from the country lying between Assuan and Khartoum ; they are chiefly employed in Egypt as servants, and they are most clever and often very faithful. They seldom seem to settle in Egypt, and their wives and homes are far to the south. The Soudanese are intensely black-skinned. They are also found in domestic service, but it is as forming the splendid Soudanese regiments in the modern Egyptian army that they get most attention. Even though his legs are very spidery, was there ever a smarter, finer-looking soldier ? Erect in bearing and swinging in movement, the march past of a Soudanese regiment is a stirring sight, and confirms the record for bravery which these troops have won for themselves. Together with the Berbers and Nubians we may class the few pure Negroes, oftentimes women servants, relicts of a past slavery.

The black faces of all make one very wistful ; they all come from 'far, far away,' and those who see them *must* long that they should yet reach that Land which is from them, so long as they are unevangelized, 'far, far away' too. They may be drawn from regions spreading out to the Great Sahara, and you realize with a pang that in Egypt they are nearer Christianity than they ever were in their own home ; yet how small is the bit of Christianity in Egypt which they might touch.

The little English girl in a Chinese seaport asked a question that was easily answered, as she watched the grimy labourers coaling a big steamer.

'Mother, does God love everybody ?'

'Yes, darling.'

'But, mother, can God love the coalies ?'

'Yes, for they are *only black outside*.'

The question that has to be asked, looking at the black faces in Egypt, and that cannot be answered with a 'Yes,' is, 'Does God's

Church love everybody ?' And, if it professes to do so, how is it that these black faces as well as the *fellaḥin* of Egypt have had so little proof of that love ?

The next important pile is the Bedouin. What interest always surrounds these people ! Free and unfettered, valiant and independent, they bring to mind the romance of the Red Indian. There are said to be some six hundred thousand of them included in the general population of Egypt, and for the most part these are nomadic, wandering in the deserts, touching perhaps the borders of cultivated land or else feeding their flocks in unsuspected little oases in the recesses of the desert. Some few live settled lives and may be found in the Delta here and there. They usually tend flocks and herds and seldom take part in general agriculture ; when settled in this way the men often form the watchmen class of a district, probably, no doubt, because Bedouin retain their bravery, and are more useful in keeping away thieves and robbers at night than the tamer *fellaḥin*. In the deserts or in the Delta they live in tents made of sheep's hair woven by the women. The square tents are about five or six feet high in the centre, but only a child can enter them without stooping ;



Bisharin Children.



Bedouin Woman.

they are simple of construction and only just give enough shelter to keep off the too fierce sun at noon-day or the too chill desert air at night. The Bedouin are divided into tribes, and the sheikhs or headmen of each tribe preserve order.

The Bedouin of Egypt are all Moslems, and the great majority of them speak Arabic; but some well-known tribes, such as the Bisharin and Hadendoa, on the confines of Egypt and the Soudan, have distinct languages of their own. In looking at Bedouin, at the resolute men, the beautiful women, or the vigorous, impish children, a long pedigree at once suggests itself; and the Bedouin are certainly the purest line of descent from Ishmael himself, and the desert dignity of that great son of the desert runs in their blood. Perhaps pictures of Bisharin after contact with Europeans may somewhat belie this statement, but the Bedouin 'brave' as he careers about on his Arab horse in the deserts of Lower Egypt, or rides off with his greyhounds for sport, bespeaks a lineage which few besides himself can claim.

Fascinating and free, made for the desert, owning the desert, they live in a desert silence, cut off from hearing one word about Him Who was 'made flesh and dwelt among us.'

Perhaps more interest is presented to us by the pile of Copts than by any other portion of the multitude of Egypt. These differ from all others in point of religion, and differ to a certain extent in point of race and in social condition. The Copts are members of the ancient Christian Church of Egypt, computed to-day to number six hundred thousand, or the same as the Bedouin. Shortly after the death of Christ, Christian teachers came to Egypt, and many believe that St. Mark himself was the founder of the Church in Egypt. At this time the old Pagan religion prevailed, the same as in the days of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses; it had been no doubt largely affected by Greek thought, but in its essence it remained. The marvellous old temples, the mysterious tombs, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the great Colossi of Memnon, all belonged to the sites of the great past, emblems of the solidity and might of the earliest of systematized religious creeds.

But by degrees the old gave way before the new; the mustard

seed of the Gospel became a mighty tree spreading through the land, and Egypt was a Christian country. Not only so, but a great Christian school flourished at Alexandria, and gave to the world men such as Athanasius and Cyril, and the city became a centre of enlightenment. Never would the Coptic Church own allegiance to the Church of Rome, and never in all the bitterness of her distresses has she done so yet. The Coptic Church has persisted in distinct doctrines as well as distinct ecclesiastical administration, and maintains headship over the ancient Christian Church of Abyssinia.

Through the centuries of oppression following on the Mohammedan invasion, the Copts, pitifully reduced in numbers, have yet preserved their integrity, and the handful of them that remains to-day in Egypt calls aloud for our sympathy. Torn with dissensions and political intrigue in the fifth and sixth centuries, they offered themselves as an easy prey to the lusty Moslem invaders, swelled with the pride of unbroken victories further East. Apportion blame where one may—always an easy task—the fact remains that it is a marvel that there are any Copts at all in Egypt to-day. Their beliefs are in many respects corrupt, and among the poorer Copts great ignorance prevails and strange superstitions; but those who nowadays are seeking to spread Christianity among the Moslems of Egypt will be the last to judge the Copts harshly, as they realize in their own work the nature of the obstacles all around.

The Copts have a great racial interest also, as they are no doubt the purest descendants of the ancient Egyptians. People long resident in Egypt can usually distinguish the Copts from the Moslems by their countenance, and some will even trace in their features the outlines long familiar in Egyptian monuments. It may, at any rate, be said that the Copts of to-day are the descendants of those ancient Egyptians who did not intermarry with the Arab invaders.

As a social class the Copts run to two extremes; a few are very wealthy and cultivated, most are very poor. Among the very poor there is little to distinguish them from their Moslem neighbours in manner of life; but numbers of Copts, forming a kind of Coptic

middle class, are intellectually superior to Moslems of a similar class, and these hold many lesser posts under the Egyptian Government, such as clerkships in the public offices. 'The dimly burning wick' of the Coptic Church is a plea for prayer.

The last of the piles is a mixture of all the others, racially, socially, and religiously, with some additions. The Dwellers in Towns form a distinct part of national life. In the great cities of Cairo and Alexandria, and the little town of Port Said, people of



Street Scene
in
Cairo.



Group of
Town-dwellers.

every nationality are to be seen ; but it is the admixture of races essentially oriental that claims our notice. Turks, Armenians, Syrians, Levantines, Jews, all crowd upon us, and the sprinkling of Greeks, Italians, French, and English is very small indeed. In Cairo, for instance, there are five hundred and seventy thousand 'Egyptians,' and only about thirty-five thousand Europeans of all classes and kinds.

Still, the European is strongly felt in the public parts of the great cities ; electric trams, electric lighting, telephones, water-carts, huge hotels and handsome shops betray their source, while smart Egyptian police, mounted or on foot, keep order in the streets.

City life in Egypt is the strangest medley ; from a brilliantly lit boulevard you can step into a tortuous narrow street ; you can jump back from a whizzing motor-car only to be knocked down by a donkey ridden by a patriarch ; you can step out of your hotel after speaking on a telephone to a distant friend to see a row of letter-writers waiting on the edge of the footpath to ply their trade, whose surest foundation is the illiterateness of the country. Such mixtures, such influences, produce a condition of semi-civilization peculiar to cities and widely remove their population from the rest of the population of the country.

Here is an instance in point. After toiling up a filthy staircase to visit a sick woman, the wife of a well-to-do tailor, the family were found in bed ; that is to say, the husband, the wife, the wife's sister, and the baby, were all lying on the floor in their ordinary clothing, covered with wadded quilts. It was the fast of Ramadan and they were not rising early. It took but a moment to throw off and neatly fold up the bedding. The missionary sat on the divan and read from her Bible to the sick woman ; the husband spread his carpet on the floor towards Mecca and said his prayers ; having previously wound up a gramophone, which squealed out the latest music-hall airs, in honour of the visit ; and then, having finished his prayers, he too curled up his legs on the divan, and interrupting the reading, said he had a great desire to visit England !

The splendid day-schools, the training-schools, the hospitals,



Unveiled Women on a 'Carrow.'

founded and maintained by the Government, are all effecting a transformation in the cities and bigger towns; and though not Christian in intention they are Christian in their source, and inasmuch as Mohammedanism is grotesquely ignorant concerning science, literature, and art, and is only informed on the narrow lines of its own blighted creed, so these modern institutions must ultimately be Christian in their tendency. But for the present there is a veneer of civilization on the mass of orientalism in these great cities, and they do not present an easy field for the planting of Christ's truth.

But the main life of the cities is oriental, and so it will be for many a day. The streets are always filled with animated crowds; there is plenty of talking, plenty of laughing—for the Egyptian is gay and playful—and plenty of colour. The red *tarbush* worn by those

who affect a modern style and Frangi or European dress, contrast with the white turbans and black robes of the older order, or the bright blue *galabiye*h of the ordinary workman. Such an absurd sight as the bride's procession in a Bedouin wedding, in which the unfortunate little bride is jerked along in a gaudy kind of draped box borne between two camels hung with bells, quickly follows on the track of a sad, sad Moslem funeral with the weird cries of the professional mourners, and the curiosity aroused by the one has scarcely time to give place to the sorrowful significance of the other. A string of camels laden with sugar-cane or cotton-stalks, straight from the fields, hating the slippery watered streets, will in their nervous clumsiness interfere with the progress of a handsome brougham and pair of dashing horses, in which sits a Turkish lady of rank with her face veiled in white tulle. Her *sais*, who runs in front of the carriage in his brilliant dress, clears the way with many shouts. Close behind that perhaps comes a *carrow*, or low two-wheeled cart drawn by a donkey which is led by a man. On this may be seated ten or a dozen women of the poorest class, going to visit the cemeteries. These crouch round the edges of the cart with their black woollen dresses closely shrouding them, their eyelids painted black, and their finger-tips dyed red with henna.

If it is early morning, the *ghaffir* or watchmen may be seen returning from their duties of keeping charge over premises, public or private, dressed in long drab felt coats and with stout sticks in their hands; while, if it is evening, the lamplighters will be seen running off to light the lamps before the quick falling night.

A woman, too poor for even a *carrow*, walks along with a little child astride on her shoulder or her hip; a blind man, led by another, begs for alms; a grave old money-changer, usually a Jew, sits behind his square glass-topped table, stored with the coins of many nations, and the hopeful beggar waits near by, knowing that it is probable that at least one millième ($\frac{1}{10}$ of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$) may come his way during the transaction. The water-carrier, with his goatskin of water slung across his shoulders, pushes through the crowd, finding many customers; and the more attractive drink-sellers who flavour the water with



A Sherbet-seller, Cairo.

liquorice or orange-blossom, and carry it in glass or earthenware vessels, call attention to themselves by the incessant click click of two little brass bowls against each other.

So there is perpetual movement, perpetual change in the scenes in the streets, the jostling together of trades, classes, and races ; and this life in the streets is but the smallest fraction, the visible fraction, of the life of the cities. That is lived in the homes by the families, and stripped of picturesqueness, there the real life is to be found.

We often idly take up the fine sand into our hands and let it slowly trickle through our fingers ; we play with it ; we sift it ; we do it again and again, but it is all idle, thoughtless, and there is no object in handling it otherwise. It must not be so with the human sand of Egypt. We touch, we sift, we examine that ; we note the mass, we observe the grains. ‘Christ for all, Christ for each,’ we say concerning this multitude, and with nothing less can we possibly be satisfied.

The Message of the Sun is Love ; the Message of the River is Life ; the Message of the Sand is Multitude. God has manifested His Love to the World in sending His Son to die for it ; Jesus Christ came to the world with His Message, ‘I am the Life.’ All that remains is to bring the Love and the Life to the multitude, and there is ONLY ONE WAY whereby it can be done.



A Ferry-boat.



A typical Moslem Face.

CHAPTER IV.

IN TOUCH ; OR HOW IT IS DONE.

EXACTLY as the canals of Egypt, large and small, bring water from the river to the dry fields, so do Christian Missions bring the knowledge of Christ, the Saviour of the World, to the multitudes of Egypt. In neither case is the supply supplementary. No unexpected copious rain will fall to enrich the ground; artificial irrigation is essential. No divine agency will be employed to evangelize Egypt apart from human instrumentality; it is Christian Missions and Christian witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit, or nothing at all. There is no 'chance' in it; nothing will 'happen' if we leave the country alone.

It is the purpose of all missionary agencies working in Egypt* to make a network of channels for the message of Christ, as it is the purpose of the rulers of Egypt to make a network of channels for the water of the old river. But it is much easier to do the one than the other. The peasants *want* the water for their fields, the people do not want the message for their souls. They are not only indifferent to it, they are opposed to it, but this constitutes perhaps their greatest need, and next to the great command of Christ it comes as the strongest incentive to missionary work, for a need must be truly vast where ignorance and darkness are so great as to secure perfect satisfaction.

* Church Missionary Society, American Presbyterian, North Africa Mission, Dutch Mission, Egypt General Mission, Soudan Pioneer Mission, British and Foreign Bible Society, and other independent workers.

Already among the educated men there is a dawn of inquiry as to the loftier faith of Christ, this dawn must spread, but the multitude of Egypt do not wish for Christ as yet—so intense is their need. A typical Moslem face is indicative of this ; pride, dominance, and self-sufficiency are stamped on it, and there is no difficulty in finding such countenances, they prevail everywhere ; and the wonder is when a face either of man or of woman is to be found in which there is any expression of thirst, or desire, or pathos, or anything that would indicate a reaching out after something better, or a consciousness of personal need.

The laughing, thoughtless donkey-boy, or the conceited dragoman, each chaffed alike by the passing traveller as to the number of his wives, and treated as if they, responsible human beings, existed for the pleasure of the irresponsible tourist, do not represent Egypt. They are well-nigh ruined religiously and socially for the amusement of others ; they are encouraged in avarice, and tempted to become bad Moslems without any approach to becoming Christians. But they are happily a small part out of the great whole; only the utter pity of it is that tourists—Christians—do not see how strong might be their influence in the land if they took up a different attitude towards those whom they employ ; if they could—not to ask for anything more positive—treat them with more reserve and less familiarity, more respect and less jocularity, and with more remembrance of the moral gulf between the Moslem and the Christian position.

Darkness has been defined as the absence of light ; evil has been defined as the absence of good ; Mohammedanism may be defined as the absence of Christ. None of the definitions is adequate, no doubt, but in the case of Mohammedanism ‘Without Christ’ is the thought-impress after any contact with it. Moslems deny, of course, the essential Deity of Jesus Christ, and class Him with Mohammed or Moses or other great men ; and thus denying Christ, they lose His Mediatorship and have no knowledge of access to God the Father. ‘Without Christ’ in His Divinity, there is no sacrifice for sin, there is no forgiveness of sin, for who can forgive sins save God alone ?

Hence the Moslem, ‘without’ a Saviour and ‘without a Mediator,’ is very far removed from the God he worships, Who is to him a distant, unapproachable Ruler. His will is accepted because it is useless to resist it, ‘fate’ decrees, and fate must be obeyed; but the love and loving-kindness of God the Father has no meaning; it is a loveless because a Christ-less creed.

There is in other religions, such as Hinduism, an awful ‘plus’ of gross idolatry added on to beliefs; there is in Mohammedanism the terrible ‘minus’ of a religious creed built up after better knowledge had been revealed to the world,—the ‘minus’ of *Christ excluded*.

While there is much in Islam, as in the other great book religions of the world, that is of moral and philosophical value, yet there are in it blots so grievous and so great, apart from, though consequent upon, the exclusion of Christ, that the bad wholly outweighs the good. This we say all the more deliberately because we admit that in certain senses it has, especially in rural parts of Egypt, influences for good on the lives of the people. We might go on weighing for ever the good against the bad; we might weigh the prohibition against the use of wine in the Koran and the injunctions to give alms, against the terrible treatment accorded to women and the sinful indulgence granted to men in the same sacred book; we might compare this thing in Mohammedanism and that in Christianity, and we should only waste our time. The one overwhelming and sufficient fact remains, the Moslems are without Christ, and this in a peculiar sense, because their creed rejects Him where other creeds are ignorant of Him; and that is the ground on which the Christian stands, and he wants no other argument to make him a missionary worker. To be ‘without’ Christ is a moral as well as a religious poverty; it is to be ‘without’ the example of a spotless life, of sin conquered, ‘without’ the meek and gentle spirit, ‘without’ the law of love to man and to animals, ‘without’ access to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, ‘without’ liberty of mind and will. And, if people live ‘without Christ’ in this life, has the Christian any right to suppose that they can be ‘with Christ’ in the life to come—the Christian’s brightest hope for himself and

all others? No, Mohammedanism is a great emptiness, a great waste; a great desert.

Yet if a river of earth can make a desert of earth green and fruitful, how much more can the River of God, turned through right channels, bring life and love to the barren and blighted souls of men? This is irrefutable; accordingly Missions and missionaries come to Egypt. They come not as social or as political reformers, they come not as reformers at all; they come merely as channels, accepting the promise that through them the 'supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ' can pass to others, and as they live and work for this end, they see springing up round them the fresh green of the Kingdom of God.

The Church Missionary Society first began work in Egypt in 1825, but its work was closed for one cause or another from 1862 to 1882, when it again began. All was on a small scale, however, for several years, and the present condition of the Mission is of recent development. Cairo, Old Cairo, Helouan, and Khartoum are the fixed centres of work, and steady itinerating medical mission work is carried on in the Delta. Even now, how small it is in relation to the need! Only four doctors, only four nurses, only four clergymen, only twelve lady missionaries, teachers or evangelists; a total of twenty-four. Only two boys' schools, only six girls' schools, only one hospital, only one book dépôt. And yet what a compact Mission it is, united, hopeful, and growing! Behind the body of European missionaries stand the Eastern workers, some of whom are Egyptians, either Copts now members of the little mission church, or those formerly Moslems now Christians; and some are Syrians. These act as catechists, colporteurs, school teachers, hospital assistants, and Bible-women, and they are just as important to the welfare of the Mission as the Europeans, and they and others yet to join them are one of the strongest hopes for the future. If a new religion were to be taught in England by Russians or Spaniards, how slow we should be to receive it; but if it were brought to us by our blood relatives from Canada or Australia, speaking our language and understanding our thought, how much more open our ears would be! In Egypt

Christian Missions have been, and still are, largely dependent on the Syrian Christians trained for the most part in the British Syrian or American Institutions in Beyrouth ; these all speak Arabic, and even though Syrian and Egyptian Arabic differ considerably in pronunciation, yet they can be mutually understood. At the same time the hope and aim is to find and to produce Egyptian Christians to teach Egyptian Moslems.

The core of the C.M.S. Egypt Mission is not its missionaries, nor its agents, nor its institutions, nor publications, but its PRAYER. Get to know that Mission a little, and this will soon appear. Every Wednesday afternoon the whole Mission gathers together ; one of the clergy or the doctors gives a devotional address, then follows the naming of many requests, then the time for prayer, in which all take part, men and women alike. Sometimes this afternoon is set apart for the Holy Communion, and always on Thursday evening in Holy Week, the eve of institution, the death of Christ is commemorated. In a similar way the native workers meet together from time to time, and in the various missionary households in Cairo and Old Cairo there are the special weekly gatherings for united prayer. Requests for prayer for all the current needs of the Mission are circulated too, and at any given moment for any special need the call to prayer is sounded. It is at these times of prayer that the helpers at home and the workers abroad most nearly touch. Fresh from home and standing on the threshold of a meeting in progress, this is what you might hear the Secretary say : 'We have prayed long for such-and-such a reinforcement ; I have just had a letter from Salisbury Square stating that So-and-so has been appointed. Let us give thanks.' And then the whole Mission would kneel in prayer, humbly thanking God for this answer, and pleading for great blessing on the expected helper ; it was a vital need to them, and every heart would be calmed that evening and every load lightened, because yet one more was coming out as a channel of life.

Just as a great public department regulates through the intelligence of its skilled engineers the supply of water passed through the canals at certain seasons of the year, so the Mission Conference



1.—A Corner of a Mission-house Drawing-room.

3.—A Corner of a Bedroom.

2.—Another Corner.

regulates the work of the Mission, meeting at stated times, and at extra times when there is extra pressure—and accordingly meeting very often. It is all corporate associated work, even though each missionary has his or her special piece of work to be responsible for. The hospital has its own staff ; the boys' schools and the girls' schools theirs ; then there are the training school, the upper-class girls' school, the men's work, the visiting work,—and through every one of these contact with Moslems is taking place. In the hospital and the men's work large numbers are being reached ; in the schools considerable numbers also, and in the visiting to one after another is the Message given. There is a time-honoured measurement of land in Egypt called the *feddan*, which is about the equivalent of an acre ; its area is that which a yoke of oxen can plough in a day. So, too, each missionary has a *feddan*, just that much work which must and can be ploughed round in life's day. Each *feddan* represents dry ground, each missionary, to change the figure, an empty channel laid for a purpose of life.

It must not be supposed that the sunshine of Egypt is radiated in the air only ; the Mission is full of it. Pass from household to household, and it is everywhere, and many a one coming to Egypt in search of the sun and his direct rays would get a warming and cheering little expected if some sunshine were sought in missionary quarters !

For, be it remembered, missionaries are human beings after all ; they differ from other human beings in having a *very* definite purpose in their lives, but that does not deprive them of ordinary feelings and interests. Because people get up in the dark and break fast at seven o'clock in the morning and work hard all day, we are not to suppose that they lose interest in their own university, or get out of touch with modern thought, or neglect all bodily exercise, or are too busy to take photographs, or cease to care for music, or a pet dog, or a chameleon, or fail to be amused at a mouse who pops out daily at afternoon tea-time for his special portion of crumbs. Not at all ; into incessant labour following on a special and particular separating 'call,' the missionary incorporates all the

naturalness in him which is to the glory of God, and seeks to live a life of earnest purpose, all the more earnest because it is healthful.

How much the children of a Mission help to this end! Coming into this world amid the strange circumstances of missionary life, they are just like any other children anywhere else. Poor little persons! they have not the same advantages; they have not the same sort of places to play in, but they do have a swing now and again; and in the summer, the broiling hot summer, when the brief holiday is spent at the seaside, there are peculiar fascinations in watching through a tent door the advent and transit of a flock of goats, or in paddling all day long, and in sometimes reversing the recognized code of respect to elders! The children have a most important part to play in a Mission, these bonnie little English children, brought up in purity and in love, an object-lesson to all around who know nothing of such sheltering relationships between parent and child.



'They do have a Swing now and again.'

Strangely hot days come in Cairo long before or long after the great heat of summer, because a south wind blows which is heavily laden with fine sand. On one such day turn into a house in the European quarter and mount up to the third floor. Leaning against one another on the bends of the staircase are many bicycles, all of them shabby and well worn (there is not much time for cleaning bicycles in a Mission—like all else, they must just be kept in working order!). The hall door of the flat opens, and inside it, departing with dignity to his nursery



In Camp
by the
Sea.

'There are peculiar
fascinations in watching
through a Tent
Door the
advent and transit
of a flock of Goats.'

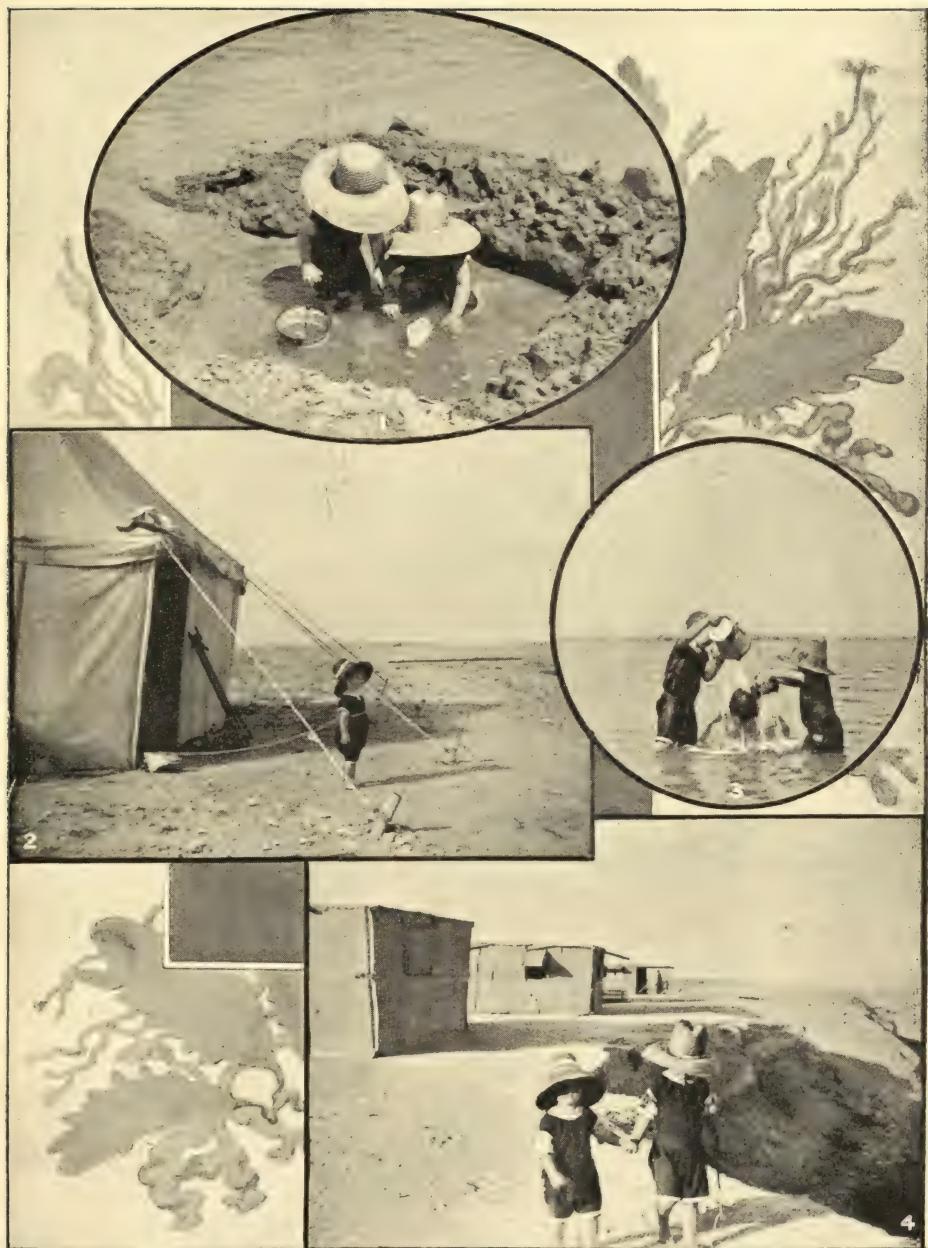


because of the presence of strangers, is a chubby little English gentleman, four years of age; beyond him is the open door of the simple, bright drawing-room, and beyond this another open door revealing a group of young men—the owners of the bicycles, no doubt—bending in close work over a table. It is a 'special

conference of the men of the Mission, the clergy, and the doctors. Something 'perfectly splendid' has brought them together, as one of their number hastens out to explain. 'A vast tract of land in the Soudan has been offered by the Governor-General and Lord Cromer to the C.M.S. as a mission-field, if they will send out men enough to occupy it.' And then the door closes on those to whose knowledge this great opportunity has come first; on one side of it there is this simple Christian family life in the great Moslem city; on the other side of it there are all the materials for effecting the destiny of numberless lives and souls, a proposal fraught with as big consequences to the world, perhaps, as the Franco-German War or any other epoch-making event.

On the borders of the native and European quarter there is a large corner house, built in a rambling and inconclusive fashion over rambling shops, over a café, a baker's, a carpenter's, and a mineral-water dépôt. It is in a very noisy position, with electric trams running early and late on either side of it. No one but a Native or a missionary would live in it, yet for the work's sake the position is ideally good. Perhaps no house in Cairo is more widely known, for here once lived Arabi Pasha himself; here he concocted his plans to weaken and overthrow European influence in Egypt, and here he and his papers were captured by British troops in 1882, after the defeat of the Egyptian army at Zagazig, Tel-el-Kebir, and Kassassin.

Bait (house) *Arabi Pasha* is the centre for the men's work in Cairo. On the ground floor there is the large matted room where the public meetings and debates are carried on, and off this are two smaller rooms where private conversations are held, and where book-cases filled with valuable dictionaries of the Koran stand. But the work does not concern us so much at present as the homes on the upper floor, for two missionary families live there. The rooms are very simply furnished, but they have much the best of all furniture in them—lots of books! Scholarship has a special place in this work among Moslem men, and missionaries who read



THE MISSIONARY CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY.

1.—Paddling. 2.—Tempted and Tied. 3.—Reversing the recognized code of respect to Elders. 4.—Down to the Beach.

and who think as well as work to the full limit of human strength are the men to carry it on. Downstairs is the bloodless battle-field, upstairs the simple, refined home. There is a piano—a wedding gift, be it known, lest any one should say, ‘What extravagance!’ and a harmonium of the humble type known as ‘baby harmonium.’ Note what a part music has in ‘nerving for the fight’ downstairs; come in to the Christmas carol party and listen to a violin, to the piano played with one hand and the ‘baby’ played with the other, swelling out at intervals into a whole orchestra; hear Wagner correctly rendered first, and then hear the triumph of instruments and voices, tenor and bass, soprano and alto, breaking out into

‘I hear ten thousand voices singing
Their praises loud to God on high,’

and you will not wonder that those who have come to listen have all found out that there is room in the mission-field for ‘the best,’ and that the greatest gifts are never wasted when they are used where God commands. So it is that music sometimes, or a camel-ride across the golden desert at other—and very rare—times, come as recreation for heart and nerve, for brain and body, and render God’s servants the more fit for ‘labours oft.’

‘Round the corner,’ so to speak, is another missionary household; it is quiet and secluded. There is no man in it, but—*there is a mother*. Here the children and girls of the boarding-school learn what Home means, as also does many another who only passes by. Nowhere is the ‘contact’ closer and more continuous in Cairo than here and in the Continuation School in the crowded Mohammed Ali Street, and nowhere more than in this peaceful household have the results of that ‘contact’ been more evidenced. ‘Get into touch’; that is the secret of all Christian communication.

The households in Old Cairo, in Helouan, in Khartoum, or on the house-boat, all have their missionary influence; it is not only the work done from them, it is what they stand for that also tells. The

flat roofs overhead shelter men and women who are pledged to Jesus Christ for ever; pledged to tell His love to others and pledged to go through with their work at all costs. Long and weary hours spent in language-study with the various sheikhs or teachers; study of the habits and customs of the new land; difficulties of climate and strange surroundings; absence of friends and home pleasures, are experienced by all within them and are accepted as essential to the end in view. But to ardent souls the parable ever speaks :—

The thirsty sand throws off a shimmering hot air ; it says, '*I am waiting.*' The silver river rustles steadily on ; it says, '*I am full.*' The glowing sun looks piercingly down ; it says, '*I can.*' Only contact is needed for river and sand ; only contact is needed for God and man.



A Mission Servant and his Son on the House-top.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN A GIRLS' SCHOOL.



The Bell-ringer.

THE Girls' Boarding-school in the Bab-el-Luk quarter of Cairo is not in the least attractive outside. Indeed, native houses seldom are, and this is one of them. The high windowless walls and the stout doors so often to be seen, rather aggressively suggest seclusion for those within and exclusion for those without. In these respects the houses no doubt fulfil the intention of their builders. They belong to the days when such things could be obtained by force alone, days which we hope will never return, but which to the

native mind, no doubt, have not permanently disappeared. Though there is this forbidding and formidable appearance, there is little real strength in the buildings, and the walls contain so much plaster that it would perhaps be easier to get through *them* than through the very stout double wooden door which provides the only ingress.

It takes a certain amount of courage to rap on the door, but every one who knows about Missions will be quickly cheered into doing so by the notice-board swinging overhead—‘CHURCH MIS-

SIONARY SOCIETY GIRLS' BOARDING-SCHOOL.' And when one side of the door swings heavily open, even though there is a lattice-work screen inside it again, to hide the girls' play-ground from casual visitors of an undesirable sort, yet all the forbiddingness disappears, for bright faces and merry voices at once proclaim that happiness prevails, and that the thick walls are richly lined with Love and Home.

This school has its own peculiar place in the modern Egypt C.M.S. Mission, for it, together with the little hospital in Old Cairo, was the first work to be established and carried on systematically, and accordingly, like the medical mission in this respect also, it has the most definite results to show. The steady pressure of Love is an irresistible force, and one might argue for ever as to why Moslem parents allow and even wish their daughters to be there—some of them daughters of Moslems of good official



Exterior of Girls' Boarding-school, Bab-el-Luk.

rank—and no result other than the waste of words would be obtained. It is Love that attracts and Love that prevails, and that not the Love common to human nature, but Love that has its source in the Love that lay on the other side of Calvary.

The bell rings at 6 a.m., and very soon there is the clattering of footsteps on the stone floors of the dormitories, and subsequently on the stone floors of the corridors and staircases. Then there comes silence: the children are having their 'Quiet Time.' Yes, let us say it very deliberately and steadily: these Moslem children are having their quiet time for prayer to God through Jesus Christ.

Then comes the clattering again, and to it is added the chattering of the strange flat voices and the suppressed merriment which, if freely expressed, would be indecorous at that hour of the day. Then the seven o'clock bell rings, which means breakfast, and it is followed by a concentrated clatter of the wooden-heeled shoes down the staircase, and as the missionaries and the visitor come down too, there the boarders are, marshalled in the outside passage, hands behind their backs, till the word is given and they all troop in to their dining-room. Silence again, and the little heads are bowed and the simple Christian grace is said, and then the hungry, healthy little Moslems set to work upon their meal.

The night has been hot, the thermometer never falling below 95° , and it is again 98° , and will be eight or ten degrees higher by 3 p.m., for even though it is spring, the *khamsin*, or hot winds, peculiar to the Egyptian early summer, are blowing. The missionaries have had their breakfast-table lifted out into the garden-courtyard, where, sitting in the shade, they get such freshness as may be, before the sun resumes his full force and the long day's work begins. The children in the room behind chatter merrily and eat; the missionaries eat with no little effort on the terrace in front, and the sparrows twitter saucily all round, as impudent and quarrelsome as if they were in a smoky London square.

'When there is complete silence grace will be said,' says a firm voice in the dining-room, and there is silence. The forms are



Dormitory Inspection.

pushed back, hands are folded, heads are bowed, and God is acknowledged.

How busy the party gets at once! Washing-up time comes now. The white enamel mugs, plates, dishes are all taken to the scullery, the crumbs swept up, the table-cloths folded, the room tidied. Round the sink there is much scrubbing and rubbing and drying. Half an hour afterwards it is well worth while to peep into the dining-room cupboard. There the shelves are neatly lined, the mugs neatly inverted, the plates neatly piled, the salt-cellars neatly placed; all is clean, all is orderly, all is simple. It is a charming cupboard.

The bell rings loudly; it is 8.30 a.m., the beds have been made, the dormitories swept and inspected, so now for drill. In the courtyard on the other side of the house there are the children with the dumb-bells. The piano in the hall begins and so does the drill in the courtyard, to rousing old British tunes. Now Egyptian children, once more be it said, are not disciplined in movement; but, nevertheless, bit by bit, day by day, they are learning, and with almost surprising facility the dumb-bells are waved and clapped and held aloft in

imitation of the movements of the well-trained missionary. Half an hour's drill, and then, at nine o'clock, come school prayers.

By this time the day girls have arrived, and once more the piano provides a martial tune, and the classes march in order into the hall and take their positions, the smaller coming last, as they sit in front, and anxiously marking time with their feet, while their seniors get between the forms. Then comes the roll-call ; the names show that all are not Moslems, though the others are but a very small proportion. Anna is a Jewess ; Virginie and Olga are probably of the Greek Church. A Christian hymn follows the roll-call ; the school prayer is repeated, and the classes file off with their teachers into the three class-rooms, and the real work of the day begins. At 10.30 comes a break, then school again, and then, in the heat of the day, at twelve, comes dinner. The same order prevails as at breakfast, but the missionaries dine indoors in their dining-room next to the children. One day in the week round that happy dining-table the missionaries kneel in prayer, for the work, for the world ; every day they keep the two hours that follow dinner either for quiet work or for rest in their own rooms.

Eastern children cannot work all day, so there is play for them till half-past two. It would be fascinating to really enter into their



Learning Lessons Out-of-doors.

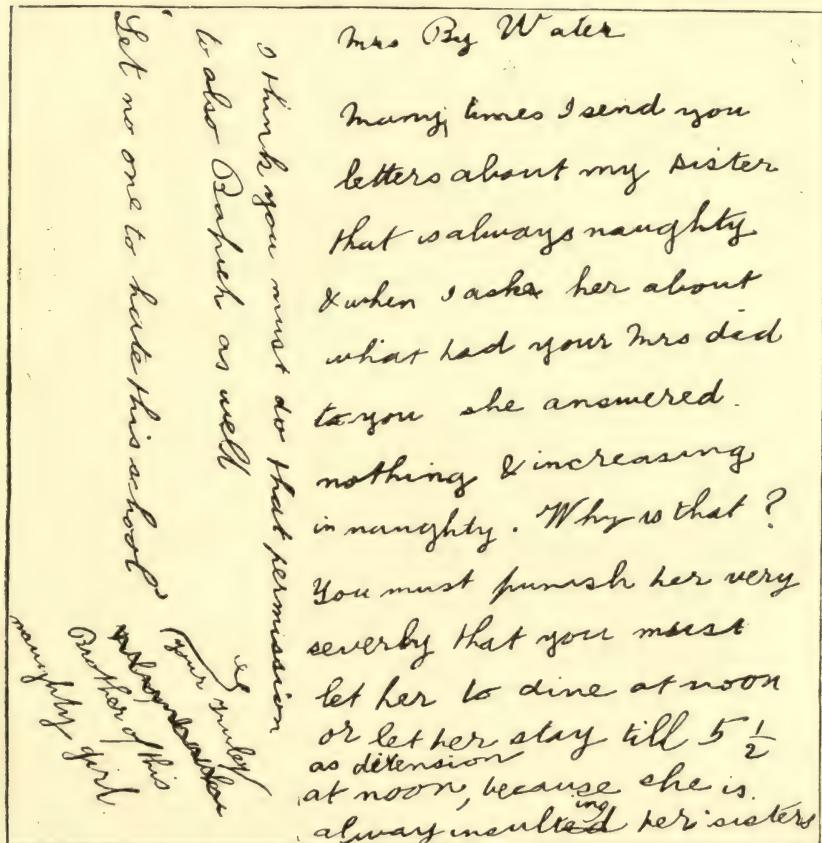
ideas of play ; it is easy to understand the ordinary games, but one among them has histrionic powers, and she invents games in which the others have to assume parts and perform them under her directions. The originality is encouraging, and undoubtedly it is well to let the children have their own natural games. It was only when the performance took the shape of a Moslem funeral one early afternoon, and the imitation of the cries of the (supposed) mourning women rose again to the ears of the resting missionary (and, of course, also over the courtyard walls into the street outside !), that it became necessary to interfere.

Afternoon school is chiefly for needlework and music-lessons, or subjects that require less close application than book-study. While it goes on the little missionary party meet upstairs in the drawing-room for tea at three o'clock. Off this room are the bedrooms, and at either end of it there is a tiny balcony, on to which large doors open. In the cold weather the air comes in penetratingly under these doors ; in the hot winds or summer days the doors have to be shut tight, as it is cooler in the house than outside ; but in ordinarily pleasant weather the doors are open, and a delicious current of air passes through the matted room.

The brass Egyptian tray stands in one corner ; the familiar teapot holds delicious tea ; the Arab cook has been taught to make bread as it is made in the ‘North Country’ ; and round the little feast gather the workers for twenty minutes’ bright intercourse. The room looks restful and refined, the tea and the bread are flavoured with welcome and love ; even the mouse knows he may put his head round the edge of the door and find his portion ready as well as if he were a ‘real visitor,’—and yet, over it all there is a strong sense or an influence or whatever it may be called ; perhaps it is the sense of a Presence, or The Presence. Only for a few minutes is there this pause ; soon the little party will break up, some to teach again, some to go to visit parents of the children, some to visit the destitute or to comfort sorrowful hearts, whether among Europeans or Moslems, but all alike on service bound.

Perhaps before breaking up the party will have had a hearty

laugh over some event of the day, some letter, it may be, such as the following, written by the anxious brother of a pupil :—



A typical Letter.

Prayers come again for the children at half-past six in the evening and when at seven o'clock the missionaries come downstairs for their supper, loving voices of the younger children, all ready for bed, say in chorus in the really best Egyptian English, 'Good-night, Mrs. ——' 'Good-night, Miss ——' to each as she passes, and to

the visitor whose name is difficult, after a momentary hesitation resolving into firm emphasis, ‘ Good-night, Miss—*Ma'am*. ’

Later on, when in the drawing-room, a gentle tap comes at the door, and then across the lamp-lit room pass (each night regularly) two little figures, always two, and go into one of the missionaries’ bedrooms, where she a moment later joins them. ‘ What is that for ? ’ you ask. ‘ For prayer,’ is the answer, and then again you



Boarders in Bab-el-Luk School.

realize that these ‘ Moslem ’ girls, *entirely of their own volition*, every night come for prayer in this way, and pour out their simple hearts to God their Father with the missionary.

Is it wonderful or is it not ? All that can be said in detraction is that it is easier for an Egyptian or for any other Oriental to be volatile than it is for a European ; but is it easy for a Moslem girl to have so learned of God that she can come and pray that many

more missionaries may be sent into the world so that other girls may learn to love Jesus Christ as she has done?

Let it not be thought that every girl behaves like an angel at all times ; were it so, life in the Bab-el-Luk school might be monotonous. It was bed-time, and a dormitory door stood partly open, the room was quiet, and in the dim lamp-light there was a little figure kneeling by her bed, with reverently bowed head and folded hands ; it was a sacred picture wholly unpremeditated and unstudied. It was too tempting a vista ; more must be seen, possibly a whole row of bent heads down the dormitory ? So a further peep was silently ventured upon, and human nature abruptly intervened, for on an opposite bed, not yet undressed, was another brown head, and the owner of it was making frantic and not altogether unsatisfactory efforts to stand on it ! Away therefore with all sentiment ; the school contained a set of real girls, some good, some naughty ; some already won for Christ, some to be won, and all alike needing the love and the faith and the courage which the missionaries showed among them.

What a bright beginning to the week is the Sunday ! The walk through the streets of Cairo to the C.M.S. church in Mohammed Ali Street is a great event. In summer the girls all wear pink cotton frocks, in winter they wear bright red—the favourite colour in Egypt it seems. Two and two they walk along, accompanied by the school-servant and the missionaries. Great is the contrast between them and those they pass ; the girls in their surroundings of purity and love, the others living in the tainted atmosphere of Moslem homes. When the little church is reached, and the party toil up the stone staircase and take their seats in front, the scene is full of promise and hope ; the young voices give a ‘lift’ to the music, and real prayer and praise go up to God from the young hearts.

On last Easter Day, one of them, a girl of fourteen, once a Moslem, was publicly baptized, taking the name of Ruth, and only the girls of the congregation, those from the Continuation School and from Bab-el-Luk, sang the hymn that followed the baptismal



A Moslem Parent of Boarding-school Girls.

cumstances the following story shows.

A former pupil in that school, one of three sisters, came to school when she was five years old. Four years later she became a true Christian, and subsequently at the age of fourteen she was baptized. Some six months later her mother removed her, and she was never allowed to return. Her father having been a Persian, she was sent to live for a year and a half in the Persian consul's house, and her missionary friends succeeded in seeing her several times while she was there. One of the *Harim* ladies said to them one day, 'We have even brought a *Sheikha* (female religious teacher) to talk to her, but it is no use; *she has it in her heart*.' This girl was subsequently married, without being present at the ceremony herself, to a Persian shop-keeper living in a village an hour's journey from

service. There was a burst of hope in that hymn, for others among the girls were truly converted to God and were longing to be baptized. Through the window there could be seen on the roof of a neighbouring house a carrion crow, that most disagreeable bird so common in Cairo; it looked the embodiment of evil design, and served to remind that there were outside many influences ready to draw away the little group of girls within from the safe fold of Jesus Christ. And yet how safely He has ever kept them even in adverse cir-

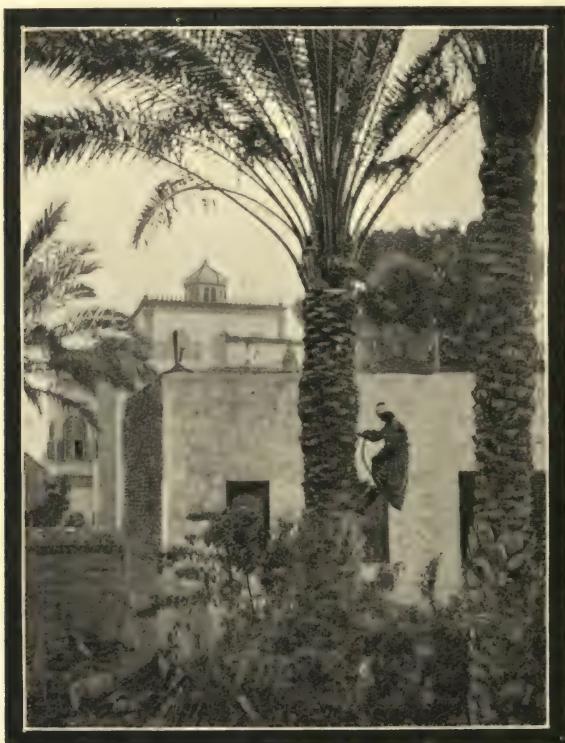
Cairo. The man mercifully is not bigoted, and he allows her to read the Bible to him and also to a younger sister and a brother who live with her. When seen from time to time, she appears to be quite true to Christ, she is still a girl, and the only Christian in that large village. Her position would be utterly hopeless were it not that she has the ineradicable love of Christ '*in her heart*,' and that He can keep her for Himself.

Many miles from this village, right in the desert, there is what is known locally as The Lone Palm Tree. It stands absolutely by itself, some four miles from the river. No one knows how it lives, nor whence its moisture is drawn; visitors go to see it and discuss the question of its existence. The desert in which it contrives to live is not a hotter nor a drier soil than is the spiritual desert in which that lone Christian girl, wife to a Moslem, lives. Her supply of strength is invisible, but Christ is in her heart, and she has not only enough for herself, but some for others. Who will pray for her that she may endure to the end? Who will learn from her when tempted to think that circumstances are too difficult?

Sunday afternoon finds the Bab-el-Luk girls very happy in their Bible-class, and often, too, finds them with perhaps the greatest Sunday happiness, sitting on the floor in the drawing-room, singing hymns, some in English some in Arabic. This is one of the ways in which the closest links are formed with them and the family life maintained. It is little wonder that they get gentle and refined in the close contact with those who love them for Christ's sake.

If Sunday is a bright beginning to a week, Saturday is a bright ending. It is a half-holiday, of course. It begins with the usual Egyptian custom of giving all the girls a good scrub! This is a regular practice among the well-to-do people, and there are women whose profession it is to wash other people. Accordingly, one washerwoman comes each Saturday to the school, and there, in the washing-rooms, every girl is duly scrubbed from head to foot, and, no doubt, much content ensues. Afterwards there is the special pleasure of deciding how the weekly pocket-money is to be spent.

This pocket-money is given by parents to the missionary, and she keeps an account for each child, and sends out to get for them such things as they choose. Here is one Saturday's choice: Fatma, Malaka, Emily, and Zayzaf, oranges; Susanne, Sirena, Asma, and



View from a School Window; Pruning a Palm-tree in a Neighbour's Garden.

Flora, sugar-cane; Blanche, melon-seeds; Zakeeya, Simsouma, and Olga, parched corn; Amalia, Louisa, Saddi-a, and Fahima, monkey-nuts. The choices may seem strange to us, but they produce very merry faces. The same girls, however, on one occasion, saved up their pocket-money and collected more from their friends till they got

together a total of over £2, which they presented to the Fund for the Continuation School. So, dear though monkey-nuts and sugar-cane may be to an Egyptian girl, she can care for others besides herself.

There is something slightly dismal about Monday mornings, for the school assizes are held on that day ! The marks for the previous week are then read out in solemn assembly, and if they are not satisfactory, many are the sobs and the moans. Emotions are always near the surface in an Egyptian, and they find easy expression. On the other hand, impressions are not naturally lasting, and the solemnity of Monday mornings, while trying for the missionaries, is useful for the girls, who learn to value keenly their weekly marks.

In Midsummer the school closes ; most of the girls go to their homes, but some half-dozen or more will perhaps go with some of the missionary party and the matron to Aboukir, on the sea-coast, near Alexandria. That is a joyous time again for them. They all live in matting houses, they have Scripture lessons daily, and much of their beloved hymn-singing ; for the rest they can paddle in the sea and play in the sands with a freedom altogether unknown elsewhere, for there are no Moslems to see them, and no houses near by.

So the school year goes round steadily, and the changes in its routine are only those caused by illness among the children, with its attendant anxieties. For the rest, there is the constant, steady influence, the undeviating purpose, the pressure of love, all brought to bear on young hearts and tender consciences ; and, even after girls have left the school altogether they are still kept in touch with it by means of the Guild, of which all who are willing are made members. A framed copy of the simple rules is given to each of them for hanging up in their homes, and is a constant reminder to them of the atmosphere they have left behind, and of the impressions they have received.



C.M.S. Day and Training School, Sharia Mohammed Ali.

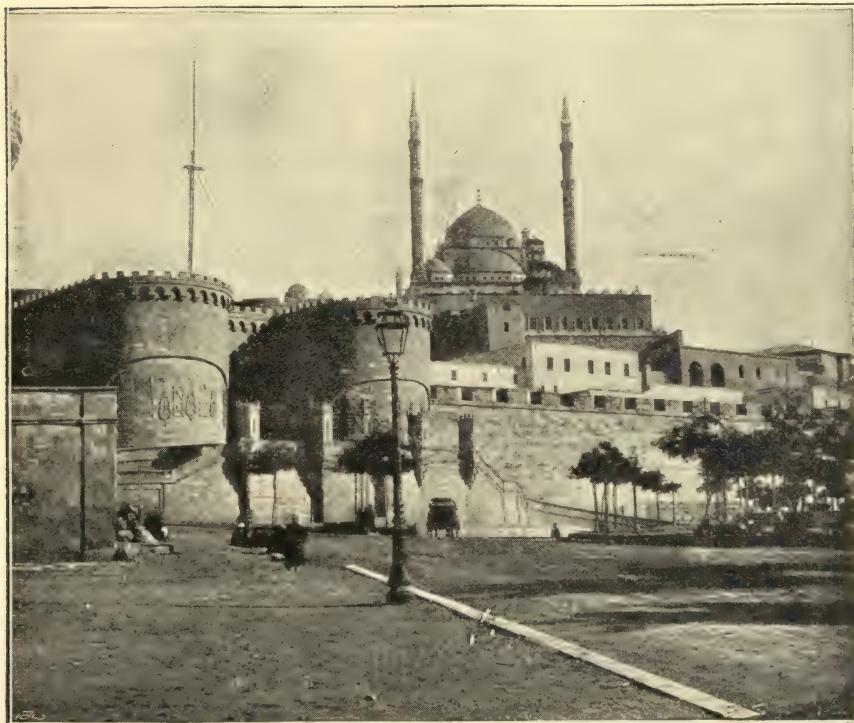
CHAPTER VI.

A NEW VENTURE AMONG THE GIRLS.

EVERY one who goes to Cairo gets familiar with Sharia (Street) Mohammed Ali, which runs straight as an arrow from the heart of Cairo to the foot of the Citadel, a distance of over one mile. Next to the Muski, which is still mainly an Oriental street, the Sharia Mohammed Ali is the best known thoroughfare. But it differs from the Muski in being a strange mixture of East and West. Electric cars run up and down its length perpetually. Uniformed policemen direct its traffic. It begins at the Ataba el Khadra, a veritable Charing Cross for confusion. Here all the electric tramways intersect, and the miserable three-horse omnibuses arrive and start. The Post Office, the

building of the Mixed Tribunals, the head station of the ultra-modern Fire Brigade, and the Cairo Vegetable and Meat Market are all near by.

Away in the distance, filling up the south-eastern end of the long street, rise the graceful outlines of the Citadel, which at once transports thoughts to the East. To speak correctly, it is not the Citadel which is seen so much as the mosque in the Citadel. The Citadel itself is a gigantic fortification of time-expired strength, picturesquely built on the precipices of the last spur of the Mokattam Hills, many parts being hewn out of solid rock. But within the Citadel, and on its highest point, rises the beautiful



'The Alabaster Mosque with its vast Dome and two tapering Minarets.'

Alabaster Mosque, with its vast dome and two tapering minarets. It is this elevated mosque which gives the peculiarly attractive effect to the busy Sharia. Nor is it this alone which preserves the Oriental character of the neighbourhood. A densely populated native district lies on either side, and the quaintest of native streets run into the big thoroughfare. Many of these are so narrow and so tortuous as not to be dignified with the name of street, but are called *Hara*, or little street; some seem impenetrable, yet wherever there is room for even one vehicle, there is sure to be one laboriously cleaving its way through the dense mass of foot passengers. At the entrance of one little street there is, perhaps, a vegetable stall, largely stocked with huge green melons, in front of which a grave and impassive turbaned Egyptian may sit, looking far too solemn to sell anything, but, without doubt, only concealing a keen desire for a close bargain. Further down, the gayest of little shops will appear, a shoemaker's, with strings of bright yellow and bright red slippers twisting and swaying in the air. Beyond this, perhaps, comes a shop where the native water-bottles are sold, which supplies a cool grey in the mass of colour, and, though the price paid for the bottles may be very small, the shop is by no means insignificant in its uses. These *ullahs* or bottles play a special part in Egyptian life. Being porous, the water is cooled by evaporation as it stands in them, and the people are careful to place the bottle in a draught, so that the breeze playing on it may further cool the contents.

There is a depth of shadow in the bottom of these tiny streets which, except at noontide, is never penetrated by the sun; at other times the strong light falls slantingly across, glorifying the upper parts of the houses, and redeeming even their dusty decay. Beneath, in the shade, the throng passes to and fro. A man, with a long roll of native matting balanced on his head, the ends of which almost touch the ground in front of him and behind him, effectively clears a way for himself, he and his burden being exceedingly awkward as neighbours. Sometimes it is a donkey, an almost invisible donkey, who presses through. Poor little beast! probably only four thin legs are to be seen bearing a huge load of

maize or Indian cornstalks, the ends of which trail on the ground behind, and in front project beyond the patient, narrow face of Egypt's burden-bearer. A camel, laden with bulging loads of cotton, would scarcely be able to appear in these narrow streets, as his bulk might make all passing impossible, and, in the main, it is foot traffic which prevails. Other of the narrow streets are very dull to the ordinary traveller, for they are the streets of dwelling-houses, and are only dreary and deplorable outside. But whether in these or in the gayer native streets, full of little shops, the real interest lies in the people—in those who buy and sell, or in those other unseen people behind their own walls.

Sharia Mohammed Ali and its environs are a repetition of the old story that there is a veneer of the West on the surface of the East, and the interest of the neighbourhood, to us, lies in its immense importance as a native quarter of Cairo. The C.M.S. Book Depôt is near the Ataba, the Arabic church is midway down the street, the girls' day-school and continuation or training class



Shops in Cairo.



Sharia Mohammed Ali.

lies between the two. It is this which concerns us at present ; this is the 'venture.'

First of all to explain the meaning of the venture. Beyond all question, in Egypt as in many other mission-fields, the day of 'small things' as regards education has passed away. From one source or another, often unhappily from very unsatisfactory ones, new ideas of education are filtering through Egypt. Egyptian men leave their country and visit Paris or Vienna, and there, absorbing modern ideas, import them to their own country. The Egyptian Government, under the enlightened influence of Englishmen, has introduced an admirable system of education into the country. Though this chiefly affects boys, yet there are large Government schools for girls also, and Egyptian parents are beginning to avail themselves of the higher class of education to a considerable extent.

This education is not, from the missionary point of view, adequate, because the teaching of the Koran and of Islam are a part of it. But it definitely affects the position of mission-schools, for it means that education which will bear comparison with that given in the Government schools must be given in the mission-schools together with Christian teaching and earnest evangelizing influence.

There is in connexion with the Government schools for girls a small training school, where those who can be prevailed on to remain and take a higher course, can do so, with a view to preparing them for teaching subsequently. The change in the general educational standard in Egypt has necessitated a change in the missionary standard also, but without doubt in the first instance the general change was induced largely by the American or other educational missionary work which has been done in Egypt for close on fifty years, long before the Egyptian Government concerned itself closely with such matters.

The girls' school in Mohammed Ali Street is one outcome of the recent improvement in method and equipment in mission-schools, and as the scene of the C.M.S. Girls' Training Class it has much promise for the future.

The school is no elaborate new building, mission funds do not permit of this, nor are missionary purposes always best served by much outlay. The house is an adapted native house, for which only a small expense was incurred. The entrance door is under the arcades which edge the bustling street, and the house stands at a corner; the shops beneath the neighbouring houses are occupied by Greek wine-sellers, and at night the noise made at these, added to the noise of the traffic, does not make it a pleasant residence. None the less, for the purposes of the school the situation is extremely good. It is easy of access to all, and it supplies a want in that densely populated part. The house contrives a 'double debt to pay,' for it is at once a day-school for the neighbourhood and a boarding-school for the training-class girls.

The big old entrance door swings heavily, and on the threshold there is the joyous, respectful greeting from Philibus, once

Egyptian soldier and Moslem, now Christian soldier and servant. No wonder his greeting is glad, for since the visitor met him last, when he was always poring over St. John's Gospel and drinking in all the teaching he could get, he has been baptized, and now he stands rejoicing that he has been able to confess his faith before men. He has not yet got all he desires, for his wife, a wild, unkempt Somali woman, is still a Moslem.

A little hum of voices unerringly guides up the stone staircase, and when the first floor is reached the region of order and method is reached also. Here on one side of the staircase are the dwelling-rooms of the two ladies. 'M. S.' are the letters under which they and all the other missionaries like their-rooms and their food to be classified; they stand for Missionary Simplicity. Stone floors there are, but a little bit of matting or one strip of carpet covers a sufficient space for daily use. A little bed, with its mosquito-nets, a wooden cupboard that would *not* adorn our best bedrooms at home, a white enamel basin and jug, a travelling bath, and a chair or two—sometimes the canvas deck-chair used on the voyage out if that is not wanted as a substantial piece of furniture for the drawing-room—chiefly completes the simple room. The sitting-rooms, too, have the greatest of all charms, whether found in places or in people—the charm of simplicity. It is wonderful how pretty a *best* table-cover four yards of cretonne will make, how restful a divan of wicker can become, how cool a little glass filter looks as a sideboard ornament (the sideboard being of roughly varnished deal), how suitable a clean earthenware bread-crock is in a dining-room. It is wonderful, this simplicity, with the grace of God upon it; the colours are harmonious, the lines are good, the object of a home is attained, and all superfluities are done away; in a missionary house there is at least an approach to the ideal 'Holding the least, giving the most.' You must look on the walls for the treasures. Pictures there are of the old homes, of the old scenes of work, of the favourite bits of English scenery—and in missionary houses is there any scenery so frequently displayed as that round Derwent-water and Keswick? There are the home faces, too, and the



Teaching Staff and Continuation Girls.

verses from the Holy Scriptures, which are not only written or printed words, but living, speaking words from God to man day by day.

But the human beings are the charm of this household. First the big girls in the Continuation Class. These are the senior girls drawn, some from the Bab-el-Luk Boarding-school, and some from other sources, for the purpose of continuing their education, so that as trained teachers or qualified workers they may in coming days use all they have learned as fellow-workers in the Mission. These need, and are receiving, a first-rate education. Sitting in a class-room as well equipped as if in England, there they were with their bright, keen faces. There are faces and faces. Some faces in England and elsewhere have only got eyes and noses and mouths and ears and all the other usual heights and hollows. Other faces have

got besides a *meaning* in them—sometimes it is a bad meaning, showing ill-temper, or discontent or selfishness; sometimes it is a good meaning, showing purpose and kindness. The girls in the Continuation Class have got *faces with meaning* and purpose, and in this they are distinguished from all untaught Egyptians. And no wonder it is so, for one and all have been awakened by the Spirit of God, and He is developing character and knowledge in them day by day.

They are all Arabic-speaking, yet they are now able to do a large part of their daily lessons in English. Holy Scripture they always do in Arabic, because that is the language in which they will be teaching God's truth afterwards. As their different names are called out—Zeynab, Galila, Säidoo, Kamaal, and many others—they rise quietly behind their desks in turn, and read aloud—in such a gentle tone—from the English Reader, and, led by the missionary, make many digressions into the meaning and differences of English words, from the subject of the lesson, which happened to be on this occasion the copper ore industry. What is the difference between melting and smelting? What is the difference between melting and dissolving? What substances can be melted, which dissolved? Then the natural further digression into the difference between fluids, liquids, and solids.

From reading to analysis was a short step. ‘The boy beats the cat’ was the starting point for this. The subject was enlarged, the object enlarged, the predicate received an adverbial extension, an adjectival clause was added, and up and down in all the intricacies of analysis went these intelligent *working brains*.

It was the same with arithmetic; one girl stated a sum, another worked it out on the blackboard. It is always strange to see sums worked in Arabic. The numerals are quite different from ours, but the arithmetical signs are the same, being handed down to us from the Saracens. Accordingly there are the familiar \div , +, −, =, and the cancelling of fractions goes on just as we do it.

There they were, this Continuation Class, bright, eager, and young. Was it *only* analysis and parsing and arithmetic they were

learning? Was it worth while to leave England, to give up training teachers there for the sake of teaching girls here? The answer hung on the wall behind the girls' heads and before the teacher's eyes; the bright glare of the sun thrown in off the courtyard wall lit it up, strengthened its colours, and drew out its message. It was only the well-known diagram picture of bold outline—the brown soil, the blue figure of the peasant man, the dark Bedouin tent behind, the hovering birds, and the interpreting legend, 'A SOWER WENT FORTH TO Sow.' That was it; and the parable of old spoken by the sea-side in Galilee was being again fulfilled in a small room in the back of a native house in Cairo, and the Sower was doing a sacred work.

There is always in Egypt a fight with dust! Such fine dust too; almost imperceptible before it falls, it soon makes a thick deposit, but no dust spoiled the freshness of the Continuation girls' dormitory or their dining-room, nor yet their *Harîm*, which, in the Continuation School, is on the roof of the arcades which extend along the street beneath. This bit of roof, on to which windows and doors open, has been enclosed at the sides and in front with a high lattice-work of wood, painted brown. Behind this lattice the girls cannot be seen, but they can see into the street. It is a little place of their own, they keep glasses of flowers there and pot plants, and when the break comes between classes they run out to their *Harîm* for a little sun and pleasure. It is good to know that there are some places called *Harîm* which are so happy and holy as this one.

But there are others in the house than these big girls. There is the day-school, too, and a pretty sight it is to see the little towsy Egyptian heads, with the hard black pigtails into which a strand of bright ribbon or wool is nearly always plaited, bent over the new slates, and the slender little hands struggling with a squeaky pencil which, notwithstanding that it has come from Holborn Viaduct, finds it exceedingly difficult to copy the English letters from the blackboard. But they are so industrious over it! The advanced pupils work on silently, for they have been promoted to a copy-book and a lead pencil. This day, however, for the sake

of the visitor, the dull lessons are put by, and, after repeating some verses from Holy Scripture, an action song is begun. The words are Arabic and the tune is—well, perhaps it is best to classify that as Egyptian. Anyhow, the voices are Egyptian, and after all the tune, or time itself, does not matter much if there is the hearty interest in the song. Three of the smallest, one dressed in the favourite dark red, moved backwards and forwards, whirling their arms round after the (imaginary) manner of birds' wings, and the other children sang a song addressed to the flying birds.

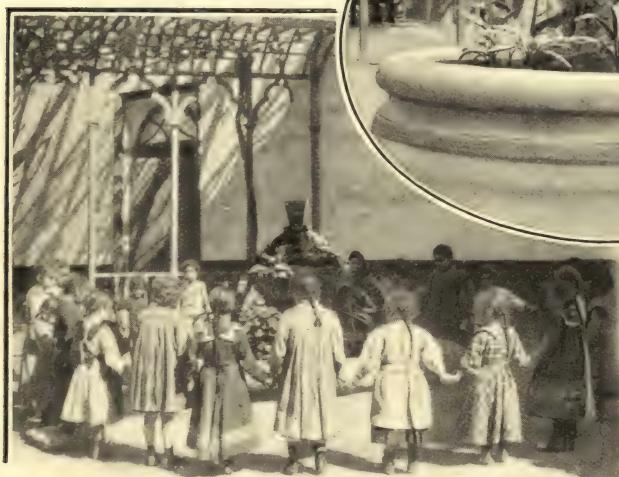
Does anybody venture to ask, 'What is the use of an action song in a mission-school?' If so, here is an answer: the child's mother is a child, too, ignorant of everything; a sudden dread of the influence of Christianity may seize her when the missionary is visiting her, and she says, 'She is learning nothing in the school, I will take her away.' 'Call in the child,' says the missionary, and then, turning to the little one, she says, 'Sing that song for



Day-school Pupils.

'The Mulberry

Bush.'



At Play
in the
Courtyard.

your mother.' And then the little flat voice begins, and the ignorant mother is pleased that her child can, with simple action, show how useful her ten fingers and toes and two eyes and ears can be. It takes a very small weight to tip down the scale in a balance, and it is often wiser only to use the small weight that will be *just enough* than to use a big weight which is more than is wanted.

It is just the same about fancy needlework in mission-schools; it may seem useless that girls should be taught to embroider a plush cushion-cover in bright silks, but it pleases the parents, and before any girl on any day does any fancy-work she has learned from the Bible and been taught about Christ. And even while she is doing her needlework she is sitting in the midst of Christian influence and in a school for which numbers of people all over the world are praying to God.

Just one last look at the day-school children. There they are down in the little courtyard between the classes singing, and in English, too, 'Here we go round the mulberry-bush.' In the many translations of the world probably no one ever has and no one ever will translate this national rhyme of ours. But the game can be translated anyhow, and twenty-nine Egyptian children were eagerly playing away with a very shaky pronunciation that sunny morning. There was the usual mild tussle to get next the missionary, to hold her hands, and then the circle began to go round. But what about the mulberry-bush? Well, there was none to be sure. The old marble fountain, filled in with earth and with one unattractive thorny cactus growing out of the top, did just as well for the swaying circle. And the one palm-tree in the corner of the courtyard, right against the walls, flung his dusky branches about in the breeze as if offended sadly that a mulberry-bush should be so honoured in his presence, and as if the coming of a Western game was an intrusion that few could brook.



In Need of Education.



Coptic Enclosure and Ancient Churches, Cairo.

CHAPTER VII.

WEEK-DAY AND SUNDAY IN OLD CAIRO.

PART I.—THE SCHOOLS.

OLD Cairo has a romantic interest for all Christians, whether they care for Christian Missions or not. If you ask the average English tourist whether he has been to Old Cairo, he will reply, 'Oh, that is the place where all the Coptic Churches are, is it not?' And he will certainly have visited it. Old Cairo is nowadays a sort of suburb of Cairo itself, but it is far older than the great modern city; the centre of its interest lies in the fortress of Babylon or Bablûn, once enclosed by the Romans within walls, of which traces remain to-day. This fortress occupies part of the site of a remotely ancient city to which the Greeks gave the name of Babylon, in imitation probably of an Egyptian name of similar sound. It is thought by many, if not by most, students of Coptic history that 'the Church that is at Babylon' referred to by St. Peter in his first Epistle (chapter v., verse 13) had its seat here. Be that as it may, this ancient Babylon, the modern Old Cairo,

was the site of one of the earliest of all the Christian Churches, and it is most suggestive that in the New Testament, as well as in the Old, Egypt may have had its special place in God's purposes, and that a Christian Church there in the first century may have been able to send greetings to 'strangers.'

The interests surrounding the Coptic Churches of Old Cairo to-day are sad ; they all reach backward to a great past and to ground lost in terrible conflicts ; it is difficult to see in their present state bright hope for the future. But the mere fact of their existence at all is proof positive to the modern missionary that Christianity *can* be introduced into Egypt from without. And the sympathetic observer of the history of Christianity, taking the broadest outlook and at the same time recalling the sorrows of the Copts, will say with the inspired writer, 'There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground ; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.' Should any one doubt the possibility of this for the Coptic Church, perhaps it may be well to add, '*It is written.*'

Old Cairo stretches southwards from Cairo for some two miles along the right bank of the river, and its chief thoroughfare runs quite close to the little channel which separates the Island of Roda from the shore. Tradition, with probably even less warrant than usual, asserts that it was to this island that the infant Moses was floated in his little ark. The other side of Old Cairo is bounded by a vast extent of rubbish-heaps, which stretch right away to the Tombs of the Mamelukes, the Mokattam Hills, and the beautiful Citadel. These rubbish-heaps are the ruins of buildings and dwellings ages old. Quantities of broken pottery are found among them, but none apparently of any special value. The discomfort caused by the fine dust blowing from these heaps detracts from the pleasure of the lovely river on the other side. Indeed, Old Cairo presents no attractions to Europeans, and but very few of the better-class Egyptians live there ; it is essentially a poor neighbourhood with an

industrial population, and the one contradiction to its crumbling antiquity and shabbiness is the vigorous electric tram-car, with its uniformed conductor and its clanging bell, speeding backwards and forwards along the main street which links it with Cairo. For the rest, life in Old Cairo is very simple.

The C.M.S. is the only Society at work in the district, and its work falls into three parts—the medical mission, the boys' and girls' schools, and the visiting carried on in connexion with both,



Street Group in Old Cairo.

and among the congregation surrounding the church, and in the villages so easily reached from Old Cairo by boat.

'What church?' might well be asked, and thankfully the answer can be made that there is now a C.M.S. church with services conducted in Arabic, built by the gifts of the missionaries and the native members of the congregation, in which God can be worshipped in a Moslem stronghold—Christian truth again lifting up its head in the scene of its greatest defeat. The building is very simple indeed, for there was little money to spend on it, even



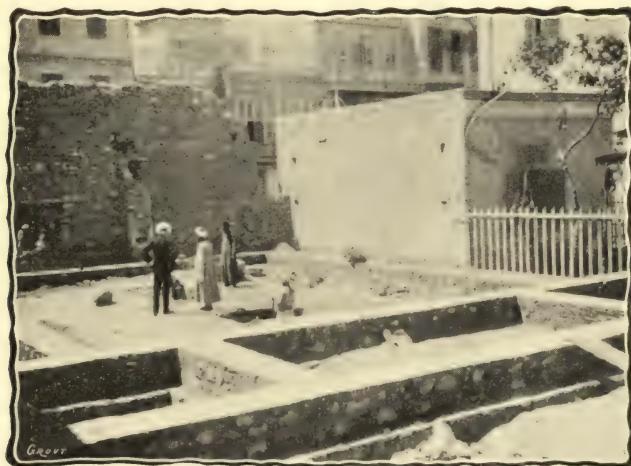
C.M.S. Church, Old Cairo.

though the gifts given were 'costlier far' than many of the gifts which build spires or put in windows in English churches. It was built slowly from its foundations, as answered prayer brought in what would pay for stone after stone. It is in all its details scarcely finished yet. Standing in the main street close to a post-office, a police station, and a boat-landing, it offers its silent witness to the throngs of Moslems who hourly and daily pass. The white marble tablet inserted in the southern wall, with an Arabic inscription to the effect that the church was built 'To the glory of God and for the preaching of the Gospel,' can be read from the road through the gateway in the enclosing wall, and high above, on the point of the gable, the Latin cross speaks of One Who was 'lifted up' that Moslems might be drawn unto Him. And already within those walls public confession of Jesus Christ in baptism has been made. It is a Church of Hope.

The ladies who visit among the women live nearly opposite

the church, and in turning across to their dwelling, there is at first sight, as ever in Egypt when you turn from the distant vision of the mission work to the near, a somewhat disconcerting change. The real and the practical are so *very* real and practical in Egypt; but in the same breath be it said so also are the ideal and the spiritual. The ladies live over a shop which would in England be called a ship chandler's, and a curiously nautical collection of goods are profusely exhibited; ropes, cables, lamps, blocks, pulleys, and anchors abound, both in the shop and on the ground outside. It is a corner house—one side faces the river, the other the street; and it has the combined pain and pleasure of much noise and a beautiful view. It is not romantic to do mission work from a ship chandler's, but then no mission work is romantic, it is all grimly real.

The outlook has its humorous side, too, at times. Within the house the missionary was one day lifting up her heart to God for His guidance and His blessing on the difficult work. Going to the window presently, she saw the arrival of a purchaser at the shop



Foundations of Old Cairo Church.

beneath. How was the horse to be held while the owner went through the lengthy process of a purchase? Ready wit suggested that anchors are not useful only when under the water, so the horse's head was tied to one and the horse's tail to the other, and thus moored stem and stern, there was no fear of his drifting!

The sailing-boats lie close by at the landing-stage, and can easily be hired on those days when the visiting is not either in the dispensary or in the native houses all round. The boats are hired in rotation, and it is said that there is only one boatman who really is too great a ruffian for the missionary and the Bible-woman safely to use. The appearance of the others certainly does not inspire confidence, and the best of them are not unlikely to suggest an alteration of the tariff favourable to themselves when they are out in the broad stream; but still they—Moslems all of them—carry the missionary to a village some miles away, and



Ferry-boat at Old Cairo Landing.

wait for hours at a time till the preaching and teaching are done, thus indirectly advancing Christ's work. It is pleasanter, in the physical sense, to cross the old river and visit a loathsome dirty village, than it is to climb dark stairways in the town houses at the base of which there is often a refuse-heap from which foetid smells ascend to mingle with other smells before the outside air is gained. 'Throats' are very difficult to avoid when visiting in Old Cairo certainly, but the dread of 'a throat' could not deter from the joy of using the voice in the service of the Master, and visiting is of first importance in the ranks of missionary methods.

The back streets of Old Cairo are very quaint, narrow, twisting, and dirty. In most of them it would be difficult for two carts

to pass; in some of them it is as much as a slender pedestrian and one cart can accomplish. The houses are very irregularly built, and often the upper story projects beyond the lower, looking as if it must topple over into the little street at any moment. Indeed many of the upper stories seem to have taken the liberty of doing this, and no one has taken the trouble of rebuilding them. The more these streets are known the more assured you are that 'Old' Cairo is their true name.

In order to see the girls' school, we turn into one of the old but large native houses just at the point where two tiny streets



'The Back Streets of Old Cairo are quaint and narrow.'

meet each other at right angles. From the doorstep the view, closely framed by brown walls, reveals the graceful minaret of a small mosque, the green branches of a lebbek tree resting against it, and on the tortuous footway below, as deep in shadow as the minaret was clear in brilliant light above, the tiny shops on either side, with their owners and owners' friends squatting on the ground chattering to each other as busily as if that were the chief object in life.

Inside the house all is spotlessly clean, though the flags and stairway are old and worn. Refreshing sounds of children's voices come down the staircase, young happy voices in Old Cairo, and no further inducement is needed for a rapid ascent.

Three classes were at work in three rooms, and one class was delightfully pretty and delightfully funny. It consisted of twenty mites, boys and girls, sitting on three low forms packed close together, all bursting with zeal and importance. In front stood their teacher, pointer in hand, and on the easel hung a diagram with the Arabic alphabet. Every eye was fixed on this (and in too many instances in the motley group children had but one eye to fix) as if taking correct aim before the volley was fired. Up went the pointer to the first letter. '*Alif*,' roared the volley. '*Again*,' said the teacher sharply. '*Alif*,' said the volley, and on and on it went.

There was a fever of excitement in the little faces and muscles when the teacher suddenly pointed to another letter. '*Be*,' roared the volley, and having but one syllable it was such a good shot! Excitement waxed higher as the teacher ceased to take the letters consecutively, and some few on reaching the fields of broader knowledge fell out of the firing



Learning the Alphabet.

line at the first round, only to be re-assured by the success of their fellows a moment later and to join the ranks of learning with unabated vigour. Poor little tots, they were learning to read, and they loved it with all their eager hearts. They were learning also to be clean, orderly, and obedient; truthfulness and gentleness were being developed in them, in these unpromising children gathered in out of the poorest homes in the narrowest lanes of Old Cairo. It was certainly a 'labour of love' to teach them, but a great deal more than a 'work of faith,' for faith had long since begun to bear fruit.

The other classes were far more advanced than the attractive infants; they did sums on the blackboard, wrote in copy-books, learned grammar, needlework, and such like. Most interesting, because most familiar, they learned English, and without doubt they read aloud in English as no English child could have read aloud in Arabic. Of course, the pronunciation was a little odd, but it only added piquancy to the lesson. '*Chon—is—foned—off—beece.*' '*The—beece—walk—on—Chon's—hant,*' scarcely recalled the drowsy murmur of the familiar insects round the hollyhocks of a cottage garden, or the presumptuous affection of the cottage lad. But it stood for much of vital importance. Egyptians wish their children to learn English; it is, as a European language, taking the first place in the country, and the people are wise enough to recognize its future value, therefore one of the chief attractions in a mission-school to Moslem parents is that their children can learn it.

These elder girls had most interesting faces; some were already care-laden, others were care-free and glad, and looked more like simple village children (as they should) than the children in the Cairo schools. It was quite evidently not a case of 'compulsory education' with them either, and, though in a more staid manner than the little ones, they took real pride in showing their writing, whether done on slates or in copy-books.

Then, as it was getting near twelve o'clock, all the classes were marshalled, and in order all descended the old stone staircase to the downstairs room where they assemble first of all each day for prayers.

They scrambled up on the gallery, method for the moment giving place to eagerness, and all turned round at once, ready for anything.

It was near Christmas time, so the first thing was to sing. And out came 'Hark! the Herald Angels'; next to this was sung an Arabic version of 'Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains'; and after this, in Arabic also, 'Around the Throne of God in Heaven thousands of children stand.' Could there have been a better missionary sermon than this? First the message of peace to all the world, the only message of salvation the angels were ever allowed to give, reaching to a false religion which was not itself born till 600 years after the little Babe at Bethlehem; then the story of the perfect Sacrifice of Christ upon the cross for those very little Moslem hearts, steadily singing the solemn words; and then the picture, far, far away in the distance, of the multitude of children gathered round that Throne of God out of every race and land—some of them the children of Egypt.

There these forty-nine children stood, all massed together, such vivid patches of colour, so unlike what we see in England, where everybody dresses in browns and greys and dull blues; there were patches of vivid green, vivid red, bright orange in a *mendil*, bright blue beads, all carelessly grouped on that gallery, and the little brown faces, brown mostly that is to say, and the white even teeth, and the harsh flat voices singing away intently. And you knew in your very heart that *this* school, and *this* Bible-teaching, and this hymn-singing were just the only way open to these children in Old Cairo to hear about the only Name. This is the sort of sight, small in itself, that makes people deadly earnest to go on with missionary work, and that makes them so glad that the school keeps on increasing in size; and that people are being found to pay the tiny fee for some of the children who are too poor to pay for themselves.

But it was dinner-time! There on the gallery a grace was sung, and off scampered the children. Their dinner-room was up on the roof, and many went straight up there; others darted out into the little street to a tiny shop where there was a specially good smell. Here these gaily dressed little girls bought what delicacies they



1.—Scholars of Old Cairo Girls' School.

3.—Teachers, Old Cairo Girls' School.

2.—A Blackboard Lesson.

needed to eat with their thin native bread, and their purchases gave them great merriment. Evidently the favourite was a rissole which was taken straight up out of bubbling, boiling fat for the purchaser, wrapped in a piece of brown paper and carried off happily to the roof to be devoured. Others bought nuts, and some got sugar-cane, but be the food what it might, they were as happy a little party as could possibly be.

So we left them eating their dinners, and went to see the boys' school. This was much larger than the girls', and of course much more important—boys always are! They were all solemnly at work, each boy wearing his red *tarbush* which never seems to come off. It looked very pretty and smart and like a uniform to see them all, as they rose to their feet in the different class-rooms on the entrance of the visitor. In one room they were doing arithmetic, in another geography, and one boy after another had to step out, take the pointer and work out part of the lesson on the map; in the third room they were reading English, and



A Busy Thoroughfare, Old Cairo.

this was, of course, the most comprehensible of all. The reading-book was in every hand. Called by name, the first boy rose and read out in a stentorian voice, very slowly, '*Ben—hass—a—fat—hen.*' Next boy, '*Ben—hass—a—pen—in—hiss—hant.*' And so on. It was uncommonly good, and you could not help wondering whether English boys in elementary schools would be as well able to read German or Hebrew, or some other language with characters different from their own, every day in school.

Some little time ago the bright idea was started that there might be Sunday-school for the boys and girls, so it was explained to them that if they liked they might come for three-quarters of an hour on Sunday mornings, from 8.30 to 9.15, for Bible-teaching and hymn-singing. Now do you suppose the Moslem girls came? Why, they came so willingly and so well that two sisters who were always late on week-days (when they paid for attendance) were punctual on Sundays (when they did not pay)!

It was a very cold Sunday morning when we got to the girls' Sunday-school—cold, that is to say, for Egypt, and the missionary thought that after the custom of Egypt in cold weather no one would come out. However, that was not so; most of those on the register were present and some new girls besides. They were all massed on the gallery again, and nearly all had red woolly shawls twisted round their heads because of the cold, so the colour effect was brighter than ever.

It would do some English Sunday-schools which are slack about Foreign Missions good to see a mission Sunday-school, where the marvel is that the children are allowed to come at all, and to see them intent on all they are being told. First came the rousing tune, '*Hold the Fort,*' sung to Arabic words far more useful in their teaching than the English ones, then a prayer, then another hymn, and then the lesson. It was the story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac, and the Coptic teacher, dressed in her black satin *habara* for Sunday, gave it graphically and fluently. Then came the exciting time of catechizing. A question was asked, out went forty hands straight at the teacher; a second's pause, and out fell the name



Girls of Old Cairo Sunday-school.

of one of the forty, 'Wagîda'! Thus selected, Wagîda made her answer, or, if she failed, out went thirty-nine still hopeful hands. Another second's pause, and this time 'Arfifa' was alighted on. The eagerness to answer—often ill-founded, however—was as pretty as the names, 'Hanouna,' 'Nefousa,' 'Sabîba,' 'Noör,' 'Haanim,' 'Malakeh,' which were common among the children, some few names, like Matilda and Rosa, showed European or Jewish origin, while 'Marica' was the daughter of Greek and Persian parents. It seemed just a little funny when some one called 'Aziza' (meaning precious) or 'Monîra' (meaning light) arose in answer to her beautiful name, dressed in a sort of long waistless frock like a night-gown, of draggled pink or blue flannelette with her head twisted up in a red wool shawl, and no shoes on her little brown feet!

But the strangest part was yet to come, for, the last hymn and the last prayer over, the little party got ready to go to church. Was there ever such a strange or even pathetic little procession as this through the streets of Old Cairo? Forty little girls, a few old

enough to wear their veils, but the others in their shabby bright frocks ; the missionary and her friend in front, the two teachers, one Egyptian, one Syrian, behind, all winding along past the Moslem onlookers to the Christian church. Going along the winding streets, the leaning walls seemed to echo some old words of One Who said, ‘ Go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and compel them to come in.’ But it was all the compulsion of Love, for each child knew that she might come to Sunday-school without going to church ; but none the less Sunday-school *and* church was the choice made, and there were even reproachful glances in church when in the hymn before the sermon and Holy Communion they were marshalled out, for did they not know the hymn, and was it not one they often sang in the school ?

Why were the Moslem children, boys and girls, not hindered from coming to church and Sunday-school ? First, surely, because of God’s overspreading Love and Mercy. Next, perhaps, because worship in a Christian church does not convey anything to a Moslem mind. And last, no doubt, because Moslems, having no spiritual power in their own religion, do not understand the spiritual forces in Christianity, and therefore are not afraid of their influence. These two last reasons are nothing to count on permanently ; but let us pray the more earnestly that because of the permanence of the first reason, the children’s opportunity may continue.



Native Helpers and Patients.

shuffling inhabitants, stands the well-set, well-planned compound. Despair of any reformation for the neighbourhood might well seize an onlooker, but the hospital compound, self-contained, simple, efficient, gives hope at once, for it witnesses to arrested decay and life renewed.

No one who cares to pierce beneath the surface of social conditions and to feel for human sorrows can afford to do without the cheer which the sight of the hospital gives. But how much more does it mean to those who recall with reverence the words and power of the first Medical Missionary in Nazareth two thousand years ago? And who can doubt that this tardy modern development of what He began is literally fulfilling His will, and expressing His love for those who are 'any ways afflicted or distressed'?

The compound, about an acre in extent, is enclosed in high white walls, and the main entrance is off the main thoroughfare with its

CHAPTER VIII.

WEEK-DAY AND SUNDAY IN OLD CAIRO.

PART II.—THE MEDICAL MISSION.

THE medical mission compound is as compact as its influence is widespread. Never was there a more delightful compound surely! In the midst of crumbling Old Cairo, with its dilapidated houses and shabby,

bustling tramway. On one pillar of the gateway hangs the familiar and friendly red letter-box; strange it is that this little home-like touch should produce a sense of homeliness before the gates are even opened; it does so, however, and we are grateful to the letter-box.

A double row of stately lebbek trees, high and arched together, make a long avenue leading straight down the centre of the compound. These trees have grown with the marvellous rapidity common to their species under the influence of the Egyptian climate, and as their leaves are only off them for about six weeks in the year, in April and May, they give an almost perpetual shade. The end of this avenue is blocked by the little temporary ward for men which holds twelve beds. To the right of the lebbek trees stand the women's and men's dispensaries, the operating theatre, and the main hospital building. At the back of these are the 'casual wards,' one for men and one for women, and the sad



Entrance to Medical Mission Compound.

little mortuary. On the other side of the lebbek trees stand the doctors' and nurses' houses ; there is a constant and busy passing to and fro, and not a little is added to the charm of the scene from the gate as a nurse in her fresh dress, obviously ready for anything, goes across to use her trained skill on the sufferers. Trained nurses and fully qualified doctors ! Thank God, nothing else would be thought good enough in a medical mission.

Behind the doctors' and nurses' houses runs the garden. This, like the garden of most other busy people, has chiefly to take care of itself, but marvellously well it does it. Roses blossom for months at a time with a profusion and grace we really do not know in England ; the poinsettia flings out its red star-fish leaves ; the tulip tree flourishes ; the chrysanthemums display exuberant abundance ; and white lilies call attention to their purity by the fragrant scent. The garden is a great pleasure now, but it was not meant to be a garden always, and even now its beauty is being sadly injured. It is in this way.

Building land in Old Cairo is of great value, and it was known when the hospital and dispensaries were being built that the mission work must increase, and that the value of the land would rise also. Accordingly more land than was needed at first was bought, and the wisdom of this act is now amply justified. For a long time past the hospital has been altogether overcrowded, and the less seriously ill patients have had to sleep on the floor. This was no hardship to them, but it was very difficult to keep the wards clean and to give proper nursing and medical care. In December, 1903, one who had lived in that compound and worked there 'fell asleep,' and those who loved her and who knew the love she bore to the Moslems in coming from her far-distant home to help them, were given the money to build the 'Ethel Pain Memorial Hospital.' It is to be for women only, and it is being equipped most carefully and arranged on the best possible method for surgical work. No one grudges rooting up the flowers and cutting down a few green trees so that part of the garden may be used in this way ; something far more beautiful than flowers is to

grow in the Memorial Hospital, even love to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is an instance of the 'growth' to be looked for.

There is at present in the women's ward an old woman, Soudanese by birth, but whose home is in the Delta away to the north of Cairo. She is a woman of some little property, but suffers from a terrible disease. She had a dream in which, as she herself told afterwards, she saw numbers of people all urging her to come to the Christian hospital; so vivid was the dream to her that the next day she set out and came. She was in a sad state, so much so that she had five different operations in four months in the hospital, but she literally drank in the message of God's love in Christ from the moment she entered. There you might have seen her sitting up in bed, picturesque in her bright red counterpane, her red bed-jacket, and a white woollen shawl twisted round her head, her black face shining with happiness—lamps lit in her brown eyes—full of peace and thankfulness. She had found all she wanted; her thirst was satisfied, her dream had come true. She repeated with devout eagerness the Apostles' Creed in Arabic, and after it she said softly and intently, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Her one anxiety is to be baptized; she knows it may cost her her life, but of that she makes nothing, for did not her Saviour die for her?

Surely it does not matter how many garden flowers are rooted up for the building of the Memorial Hospital, if the building grows flowers like this Soudanese woman for the garden of God and of Heaven!

On each week-day morning, except the day reserved for operations, the compound presents a very busy scene. Prayers begin in the two dispensaries at 8 a.m., and by that time rows of men and women are squatting and sitting in their respective rooms. One of the doctors or other workers gives an address, and at 8.30 the regular medical work begins. The dispensaries are built on either side of the consulting-rooms and dressing-rooms, and

the rooms are so arranged that the patients who go into them need not return into the dispensaries, but leave the compound by a door at the back, and get their prescriptions made up by the dispenser as they pass through.

The men out-patients look stolid and impassive enough, the women are embodiments of the dignity of rags. They are both very unlike the laughing, thoughtless Egyptian in the streets of Cairo. Poor things! for the most part they are in suffering or



Waiting for the Doctor.

bear some sort of load which even their childish nature cannot throw off, and they are sobered.

The women usually look very miserable according to our ideas, for their black and all-enveloping garments are essentially dismal, and not even the gay and flimsy jewellery worn by those who come from southern provinces gives any colour relief. They all look to be in mourning in the dispensary when, on a cold winter's morning, they sit huddled up and hold their garments across their lips. But let one of them arise, perhaps with a child in her arms, as her number is called, and move towards the door

to the consulting-room, and the European onlooker will almost say, '*Après vous, Madame*,' so great is the dignity. Nor is it altogether pleasing dignity; there is a good deal of boldness in the strut, and the politeness wrung from the European would be unnoticed by the Egyptian. But it is amazing what dignity the well-poised head and neck will lend to the appallingly dirty and trailing black robes, and what pride of bearing the square shoulders impart to these poor *fellaḥin* women—women who are taught to believe they have no souls, and whose women ancestors have believed the same for perhaps fifty generations.

As they sit on the benches, waiting for their turns to see the doctors, the woman missionary and the Bible-woman go from group to group teaching Bible stories and the Gospel. In the men's dispensary the catechist, himself an Egyptian, does the same. About ten thousand different cases are treated each year; some come from as far south as Assiut, others come from far north in the Delta. Could any one possibly imagine a better way of spreading the message of Jesus Christ than by reaching these thousands of people who are ill? It is because of all the grateful patients from Old Cairo Hospital scattered about in parts of the Delta that the house-boat [see Chapter XI.] is so eagerly welcomed, and as the patients go back to their villages, whether they have learned much or little themselves, they give their neighbours a good report of the hospital, and so its influence and usefulness are spread.

There is one special disease, known as Egyptian anæmia, which the men and women who work much in the fields get, chiefly it is thought from eating food with their fingers when they are covered with earth. A cure has been discovered for this, and the disease and the cure bring large numbers of patients each year to the hospital. They are known there as the 'Thymols.' They stay for a month, during which time the cure ought to be effected; they do not have nice beds with red counterpanes, for such luxuries are not needful; they are given broad wooden benches in the 'casual wards,' and they sleep most happily on



Egyptian Anæmia Patients.

these. Their garments are very baggy and loose, and they serve as mattress and blanket and nightcap and everything else by night, and by day the same baggy clothes serve as a Gladstone bag or a portmanteau, and hold all small personal treasures, accordingly there is no luggage to be troubled with.

The special treatment consists in long fasting, then medicine is taken, and then the next day certain kinds of food are given them ; they are very patient about it, like patient children, and they present their mouths at the dispensary window in a docile way, one after the other, and the dispenser pops in a pill which they gratefully swallow, and then go and lie down on their benches again for a certain number of hours.

There are therefore three classes of people treated in the com-

pound, the ordinary out-patients, the anæmia patients or 'Thymols,' and the in-patients. Of course of these the in-patients get the strongest, steadiest teaching, the 'Thymols' a month of regular teaching, and the out-patients regular or irregular teaching according to their attendance.

Far away in the Delta an elderly woman was found lately who *in her own village* was telling steadfastly the story of the Crucifixion. She had been an anæmia patient, and in one month she had learned the message; all the details were not quite right, but then the essentials were, and her heart had outstripped her dull brain. 'They nailed Him to a door,' she was saying earnestly, 'and He died to forgive my sins.' Perhaps it seems very simple to say this; perhaps it is no proof at all to some that the message of life is getting into dry places; but if so, it is only because they do not know nor understand Egypt nor the Moslem faith in which the proclamation of the Crucifixion and the Atonement give deadly offence, and may, according to their law, mean death to the Moslem who accepts them, and will inevitably mean bitter persecution. We have got to add that woman and the Soudanese woman—both from the medical mission—to the number of living missionaries in the land of Egypt.

What a number of eye cases are to be seen in the dispensary! There, one day, was the nurse (in the absence of the doctor) deftly turning eyelids inside out one after another as the patients passed through; washing them out, touching them, putting in drops, then hurriedly washing her own hands, and when they were scarcely dry there was the next case sitting in the chair. You feel tremendous sympathy for them, first for the poor eyes, but more almost for the discomfort and pain caused by the touching and the drops, yet really the fact is that in a sense *they like it!* It is a peculiar taste no doubt, but so it is. We always turn from operations with aversion, we hardly can talk of them without feeling rather cold, but the patients in the Mission *like them*, and they are disappointed if their cases are treated medically instead of surgically; even for indigestion they would like to have something cut out of them, and



1.—A Corner of the Hospital.

2.—The Temporary Ward.

3.—A Bit of the Compound.

they have no dread but rather a pleasure in being given chloroform or any other anæsthetic before a big operation ! It is easy to understand on the ground of total ignorance among poor Egyptians. Something remedial that can be felt at the moment it is applied is more comprehensible to them than the slower processes of diets and medicines.

Many quaint things happen, and many sad and pathetic in the compound. There was a strange scene going on that same day in the consulting-room next to the eye dispensary. A poor little lad of five or six, with a bad tuberculous knee, had been brought in by his father and mother ; they all looked woebegone and very poor, but poor they were not. The little chap had been some time before brought to the medical mission for examination, and the doctors had said that they could remove the bad part of his knee so that he could walk again, and that they would do the operation and keep him in the hospital for six weeks, all for £1. But the father and mother thought that too much ! So the little fellow was taken away to a public hospital. As soon as the doctors there saw him they said they would cut off his leg altogether. This distracted the parents, so back in all his suffering he was brought some days after to the medical mission, and the parents loudly announced they would give the doctors £1 10s.—10s. more than had ever been asked—if they would do what they had proposed before. The doctors were quite willing, but details were difficult to arrange with this little party. The boy with his terrible leg was crying weakly—a kind of whisper-crying—the two kindly, skilful doctors were ready to come to an agreement, but the reluctant parents suddenly, under the sway of avarice, said they would not pay anything at all unless the child's complete cure were promised at the end of the six weeks ! Who could promise them that ? What infinite patience and long-suffering it takes to help people who are swayed by every passing idea ; love for the child ; money rather than child ; limb rather than life ; then child rather than any money ; then again no cure, no money.

It was a very sordid scene, and such a relief to turn from it into

the women's ward and there see two girls from one of the Cairo mission-schools, real, loving Christians in heart, though unbaptized. One had diseased bone, the other had (temporary) paralysis of her face after a serious operation on her head. They were so tender, so shy, so refined ; you instinctively spoke in a lower tone



Little Patients
in
Old Cairo
Hospital.

A Corner
of the
Men's Ward.



to them, their gentleness made you gentle—what was it ? Simply that Jesus Christ was in them ; it was His presence that was felt. No wonder that as they were well enough to walk from one room to another they taught the women verses from the Bible and ministered to them. Here again we see that there are more missionaries in Egypt than are called by that name.

There are other days in the compound set apart for the impor-

tant operations when, hour after hour, doctors and nurses are busy with their more serious duties ; there are the anxious hours and even days which follow on the major operations, when life may hang in the balance and when the exercise of the highest skill is called for. And then there are the brighter days when convalescence sets in, and once more the patient is able to receive the words of Christ when in his unconsciousness he had before been receiving of the Love of Christ through the skill of His servants.

The completeness and comprehensiveness of a medical mission is marvellous to behold ; it is as if Christianity flung her arms right round a human being, body and soul, in a close embrace involving cure for both. Those who support cots, provide appliances, make requisites, often little understand how much they are spreading the Kingdom of Heaven. A corner in a hospital, with perhaps an old man recovering from an operation, sitting in his bed, may be an illustration to them of the hundred-fold return which is resulting from their effort. A group of native helpers, themselves brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, give evidence of love communicated ; and the patient, suffering faces of adults or little children speak of a depth of need. It is hard to say where Christian love finds its fullest expression on earth ; but the place where it is easiest to see it is in a medical mission.

It is worth while to spend a Sunday in the compound. There are no out-patients that day, and only the necessary dressings are done. It is a day of rest on the medical side and a day of service on the spiritual. Outside the compound it is as any other day. Trams flash by, laden animals toil as usual, labourers bend to their work, and street sellers cry their goods. There is no Sabbath in the land of Egypt, and the blight that falls on man and beast, where God's fundamental law of rest is disregarded, is heavily present. How sweet it is within the compound then ; it is a sanctuary, an enclosed place reserved for God and His honour. The Saturday-night prayer-meeting has not a little to do with the Sunday morning's peace ; there the needs of the patients, the

obstacles, the apprehensions, are brought to God in prayer by the men and women missionaries ; there God lightens burdens, gives wisdom, and strengthens hope in response to need expressed, and the spiritual communion is an absolute reality. It is good at the close of the meeting when all unite to sing, ‘Fight the good fight with all thy might, Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right’ ; and it seems not at all unfitting when subsequently one of the doctors shows some Australian gold obtained by the slow process of washing. It was certainly typical of the work in the compound, much sedulous labour, many pure grains reclaimed.

After early prayers in the wards comes a service for the anaemia patients. The men stalk in single file from their ward round the compound to the dispensary, where their service is held ; strange objects to behold on a cold morning. Egyptians contrive to look extraordinarily muffled up in wintry days, and with perhaps some sense they wrap up their heads voluminously ; so too these ‘Thymols.’ Meantime some of the missionaries have gone off to the boys’ and girls’ Sunday-schools in the day-school buildings, and others prepare to go to church half a mile away to the Arabic service—that is to say, all the workers who can be spared from hospital duty.

The church within is tended with that reverent care that one often misses in churches at home. It is spotless in its cleanliness and its poverty is very dignified. A curtain down the centre divides the men’s side from the women’s, but this ends before the raised chancel begins, and every one can see the clergyman or the preacher. There is no stained glass in the windows, but skilful fingers have put suitable coloured paper on the glass, and in the fanlight of each window, adapted to the shape of the glass, there is the simple Latin cross in red, and how much that emblem means no one can understand until they are in a land where it is the hated of all emblems and the scorned of all signs.

Then the music began—*real* music—the American organ being a new and beautiful gift indeed ; the voluntary spoke of peace and rest and worship ; the children from the Sunday-schools sang with

all their lungs ; the Litany in Arabic followed ; the sermon was in Arabic also, of course, but the best part of the service was to follow, for it was the day for the Holy Communion. While waiting for this in solemn quiet the organ played very softly ‘Oh, rest in the Lord,’ and Cairo and its Moslem souls seemed very far away and the presence of Christ very near. But as the service went on yells began in the street, the yells of women, piercing enough to turn your heart cold, the yells of many voices not in anger but in uncontrolled lamentation. They had a simple cause, however, it was the conscription, the taking of young men to serve in the Egyptian army, a thing that produces far more distress and disturbance to an Egyptian than Death itself. But coming when it did, the tumult seemed to remind one that the peace of the little church was not to be a selfishly enjoyed peace, but a Message of Peace to men, to all ‘outside’ the fold of God, ‘without Christ’ and ‘without Hope.’

There was another happy scene in that compound on Sunday ; yet another, and this the first and original of the Cairo Sunday-schools, was held. It was more advanced in its arrangement than the other, for instead of sitting altogether, the children were divided into classes with teachers. They were just the same eager children, but, not belonging to the day-school, they were far more unkempt, regular street children, and quite the nicest of them was quite the dirtiest and shabbiest. They were children you loved straight off; here they were with one chance a week of hearing what was pure and true, one chance a week of coming to God, one chance a week of learning to live a better life. And they took the chance. There was no compulsion, no attraction ; they had to sit up and be good for thirty minutes while they were taught ; they had twenty minutes in which to stand up to be catechized, to sing hymns and for prayer, and yet they came. The only outward reward was an old Christmas-card given to each on going away if they behaved well.

The real reason they came was that there was Some One Whom

they could not see saying to His disciples in the compound, ‘ Suffer the little children to come unto Me,’ and He ‘ drew’ the children towards Himself.

Do not, however, picture them all as rows of little saints with neat pinafores and neat pigtails and neat shoes. They were not, they were only *real* children, a very bedraggled set with trailing little dresses and shawls, or, if they were boys, with very grimy



In Sunday-school.

galabiyebs, and they had just as much mischief and fun as children ought to have. The nicest of them all got into trouble! They were all standing for prayer at the close, and she had the fingers of her two hands spread wide across her face, and her bright eyes were peering all round—and she giggled! It was most infectious, that giggle spread to three others, and these barefooted little persons were led silently to an empty form while the prayer was finished and the school filed out one by one. Never was there

a nicer set of Sunday-school culprits, and though the offence was serious, it was very difficult to look grave, in fact it was *impossible*, when the nicest of them all and usually the best behaved again spread all her fingers over all her face and said, ‘And was I not good? And was not my face covered like this all the time?’ Even now the memory of that giggle was too delicious, and it came again! These are exactly the sort of children for a mission Sunday-school.

Ten thousand people at least, not counting the Sunday-school, in that compound during the year. Ten thousand people hearing something about the love of God in Christ; ten thousand dry grains touched with living water. That is the work of the medical mission in Old Cairo.



The Dispensary, Old Cairo.



A Riverside Village.

CHAPTER IX.

A VILLAGE VISITED.

THE village was built right on the edge of the Nile. At high flood the water would have been on the level of the streets almost ; now it was some fifteen feet below. The sailing-boat set off from Old Cairo on the opposite bank of the river, and slowly made its way across, heading for a large and rapidly increasing mud island, formed chiefly by the receding waters, and on which presently immense quantities of melons would be sown, in time to ripen before the hot summer days. The current ran strong when the island was past, and, beating up against it, helped by the wind, the village was reached. A mud village on a mud-bank took the vivid Egyptian sun to make its outlines clear ; but the sun was helped to do this by the row of graceful palms on the top of the bank, and the few lebbek trees which threw some of the houses into relief.

The boat had come silently along, but it arrived in the midst of

a noisy scene. The black-robed women were washing garments in the muddy river, beside them women and girls were fetching water in great jars, and carrying these heavy loads up the steep bank on their heads ; the geese were having a paddle under the banks and away from the current ; and a group of men, women, and children, sitting all together on the ground with their backs to the mud wall of a house, facing the glorious sun and near the shelter of the lebbek tree, proclaimed the village to be very much alive.

One old man, with Oriental courtesy, advanced, and, after salaaming, led the way to the group, whereupon two or three moved from the centre, a piece of matting was spread on the dust, and the missionary, the Bible-woman, and the stranger sat down on the matting against the mud wall. All the usual salutations went on, and the Bible story began and was listened to with keen interest. What a strange group it was, on closer observation, and *desperately* interesting. Of course it was strange enough just at first to sit on dirty matting, on dirty dust, against a dirty wall, with dirty clothing touching you all round, and for half a moment thoughts wandered off to the horror which fastidious friends, who have not learned to 'descend in the steps of the Son of Man,' would feel if they saw the surroundings ; but the next half-moment and ever after you could only think of the people themselves. There they were, living their *real* life before your very eyes, undisturbed by and unprepared for your visit, and you saw the real thing—for a brief time—real village life in Egypt. The visit was to the women, but several men also sat round, and one, Nicodemus-like, or else Zaccheus-like, or even slothful-man-



A stiff Breeze.

like (who would only turn on his bed), had his chin resting on the mud wall behind, so that he could comfortably look down on all our heads, and we could only see him by gently looking out of the corner of one eye when occasion offered.

The inner ring of the group was absorbed in interest in the story of David and Goliath, and the moral about the strength of Satan and the power God can give to overcome sin. This inner ring was often disturbed by a mite some two years old, just able to walk, and as assertive and selfish as if quite grown up, who wandered about proudly possessing a bunch of carrots, which, all unwashed (like himself), he greedily ate. Poor little creature, his eyes looked badly diseased, and one would have thought him quite blind, till a woman in the group asked for a carrot, and then, with more discretion and vision than you could have given him credit for, he picked out *the smallest* one and gave it her. She was quite contented, perhaps because he was a boy and would yet be a man (disease and dirt permitting), and she was only a woman. Small incidents like this in no way disturbed the audience or the missionary. Eager interjections were constantly made both by men and women, and the inattentive received a good-natured rebuke as cheerfully as it was given. The disturbing circumstances all round were natural to them.

There was a black donkey with an orange cord round his neck, who was going to the river for a drink; he determined he would show us all what he could do with his heels as he passed, and he had a good caper. He was soon followed by a soft, fawny buffalocalf, with a shiny wet nose, who gambolled about wildly with a dog; it was good to see a bit of real happiness in the animals. Then there was a black kid, and certainly both kids and goats in Egypt are determined to make the best of everything. He stood restively on the top of a block of stone near by, and gazed at us all. A very big, coarse-looking man, a really alarming-looking man, who began to interrupt on the outside of the group and was bravely and effectually rebuked by the missionary, took compassion on the kid's depression, and sent a child for some kind of seed. This he

poured into his capacious lap, and the black kid soon popped his head in after it and ate most cheerfully. Pitifully diseased babies, in evident suffering, for whom no one could wish existence, crying in the arms of their girl-mothers, were everywhere about : the lot of the animals was far better.

And so the work of God went on in this strange group, some sitting eagerly and listening, some sitting idly by, some to and fro at their daily labours ; and the Word of God, true as ever, came to mind with new force, ‘ He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’



A wide Village Street.

The story being ended and the lesson applied, the group broke up, and, leaving the high bank, we went down a tortuous little street about four feet wide. Be it remembered that Egyptian village houses are often two-storied. You enter through a doorway into a mysteriously dark region, lighted only from the doorway and from a stairway that leads to the second story, which is open to the sky and not roofed over. Really the ‘ roof’ of a village house, or at least the chief part of the ‘ roof,’ is like the second floor of a house which has not been roofed. It has a high mud parapet all

round, and in one corner a little partition is roofed over, where the family sleep in cold weather. But the ground floor is like a dark cattle-shed with partitions ; near the door is the family oven, and, further in, live the family goats and the family donkeys and the family pigeons and family dogs and family cat and family rags and refuse, and up on the ‘ roof ’ the family itself.

It is always nice, and always possible, to find some sort of compensation in every evil, and in the first house visited it was found in a dear old vine. It grew up out of the dark region among the goats and refuse, with its twisted, gnarled stem, right up by the crumbling stone staircase to the roof, and there, having struggled from darkness to light, it spread its branches over a trellis-work and provided shade and shelter. It made a natural baluster to the staircase, this old vine, and it brought obviously a message also, for it spoke of Life and Possibility even in an Egyptian village, and that if God and His parables be looked for everywhere, He and His meaning can be discerned.

This is how we got access to the house. We had stopped at a shop—a grocer’s shop. It was three feet wide and about three feet deep and eight feet high, but still it was a shop, and we bought a pennyworth (half-piastre) of sweets—though not for ourselves. They were to be rewards to the children who would then and there wash their dirty faces ; ‘ dirty ’ not being nearly a strong enough word, however. The grave shopkeeper said his wife was ailing—would we care to see her ? Agreeing readily, he rolled in his robes over his tiny counter, and, leaving shop and groceries and all, conducted us to his house. Here it was that the vine grew. We climbed up by its grateful aid, and found ourselves welcomed on the enclosed roof.

Out with a piece of matting again, and down we sat on the ground. In one corner sat a bright girl, of about fourteen, daughter of a divorced wife ; all over the place were five little children, belonging to the present wife, and there she was herself, smiling and friendly. She soon described her illness, and was well advised, and then she proffered and insisted upon making us coffee. This

was quite an exciting process. A huge water-jar—called a *zier*—stood in one corner, filled with muddy Nile water; near it was a little fireplace formed by two stones, on which a cauldron of water was boiling; near this, again, was a basket made of palm-leaves, full of very dirty clothing, about to be washed in the cauldron. There was a tin dipper, or spoon, and a benzine lamp in a niche in the mud wall, and that comprised evidently the kitchen and dining-room utensils!

Out of the little roofed-in part was fetched a curious kind of wrought-iron stand, something like a mushroom, with a flat top, and about eighteen inches high. On this were some hot ashes, and the woman deftly piled together on the ashes the cobs of Indian corn (from which, of course, the grains had been removed), and, puffing the ashes skilfully, up blazed a bright flame. A tiny coffee-pot, full of Nile water, coffee-coloured already, was set on to boil. Then one of the ragged children was sent to fetch sugar and coffee and the coffee-cups. The last arrived first, pink, the size of egg-cups without stems, on a very grimy tray. The child was told to wash them, and she began to do it, but it would have been hard to say whether all the black that came off was from the child's hands, or the tray, or the cups. Anyhow, all three were well wet, and then the cups and the tray were laid on the soiled clothing to dry! Meanwhile the water began to boil, and another child with black hands brought a wedge of sugar, which was put into the coffee-pot and nearly filled it, so we knew our coffee would be sweet. Then our hostess, undoing the brown-paper packet of coffee with her teeth, shook it into the boiling water, and coffee, sugar, and water were boiled together. Could she have noticed that we looked a little apprehensively at the cups lying among the soiled clothes? Anyhow, she got up brightly and washed them again herself in the boiling water from the cauldron, and again laid them back on the self-same clothes, till she was ready to pour out the coffee!

That coffee was *very* sweet, but it was most hospitably given, and we are told not to ask questions, but to eat the food set before



Mud Houses on the Banks of the Nile.

us when we are doing our Master's business. Then began the real object of the visit. The Bible-woman graphically and suitably told the story of Zaccheus, and the husband-shopkeeper listened most gravely and attentively, interjecting in the usual way as he solemnly puffed his cigarette. There was a good deal of restlessness among the five children, and at times they were sent away altogether by their listening father; but the cause of the restlessness was soon manifest, for two of the banished ones re-appeared with clean faces! Receiving their reward, two more disappeared and re-appeared under similar circumstances, and they, too, got sweets, and it seemed not a little funny that these rewards for cleanliness had been purchased in the father's shop!

But the little son, about two years old, his face was smeared

with *very* old dirt ; he could not wash it himself, and he did want sweets, and what was to happen ? All this time the story of Zaccheus went on steadily, and never once did the man cease to attend. The mother kindly solved her little son's problem. Turning the lid of the cauldron upside down, she ladled out some boiling water into it ; got a big bar of soap, native, and very strong at that ; scrubbed his hands and arms with it, and, having made a really good lather, simply scoured his face, and specially his blinking eyes. Egyptians think soap good for the eyes, but certainly judging by this special process, which the little chap manfully endured, there is little wonder that the faces are so often left dirty from choice. Being finally well dried up from the same useful basket of soiled clothes, the reward, well-deserved truly, was claimed and received.

Is this the way in which people think itinerating mission work is carried on ? It is not easy, is it ? But it is only by stepping right into the home-life of the people, and there, in the midst of the daily duties, telling them of Jesus Christ, that anything can be done effectually.

Carefully going downstairs, there was the oven at work. No light to work by, except the flame at the back, which was fed by the fuel made of the droppings of animals. A girl sat on the floor by the oven ; beside her was a basin of water and a tub of dough, and in her hand a dipper with a long handle. She dipped the small round dipper into the water, a child put a lump of dough into it, the dipper was put through a hole into the oven, turned over, out fell the dough, the dipper was reversed, and one pat given to the dough to flatten it, and out came the dipper swiftly for more dough. Even while we sat there on something indistinguishable in the dark, a batch of bread was finished, and we were given some to eat or to keep, according to preference.

The next visit was to a group of women ; and in this group there was nothing attractive. It was all distasteful to every sense. It was sordid, it was squalid.

We sat on the thick dust on an old ragged garment, kindly produced for our benefit, in a tiny square formed by the angle of two houses. The little group round us was poorer than any we had seen, more ragged, more sordid, and yet one woman, specially dirty and unkempt, was quite rich, for she was the owner of a proud turkey-cock, who resented our intrusion, and he was to be fattened and killed and eaten at the feast. Riches are relative.

She was so attractive, this poor, repulsive woman, with her eyes nearly closed from disease, as she leaned forward eagerly every now and again to say gently and even longingly to the missionary who was teaching them, '*Habibtie*'—'My loved one'—a special Arabic term of endearment. Their lesson was the parable of the Ten Talents, and keenly did some of them seem to appreciate and understand its practical lessons.

We were much disturbed by dogs. There was one who would bark and howl and groan inside the doorway near where we were all sitting, and we were inconvenienced also by a brown goat, with a very strong character.

'That,' he said to himself decidedly, as he looked at the doorway, 'is my house, and I shall enter if I choose.' And so he did, walking over us all, and brushing shoulders or faces with his hairy sides as he passed in.

'And also I shall leave again,' he said to himself, and he was as good as his word. But his third intention of once more returning was frustrated by an umbrella, and even that goat understood that sign.

The sun blazed down on that dusty corner, and the walls gave off the heat again. Would the sun scorch the seed as it sprang up and wither it away? or was it only an emblem of concentrated divine love? What matter to the worker? Is it not written, 'In the morning sow thy seed . . . thou knowest not which shall prosper, either this or that'?

On again to the next house. The entrance to this was longer,

and it led into the family working-room, which was far larger than in the previous houses, and had more light. Four women, five children, and a man were squatting in here, and the welcome was sincere as from well-known friends. Except from one woman, there did not seem to be intelligent response as the Bible-woman unfolded the story of the Birth of Christ. We all sat facing the little group, and behind us jumped about two brown goats

and one black one, and over our heads, in the prettiest way, pigeons flew in and out of the broken water-jars suspended from the rafters to form nests for them.

As one's eyes got accustomed to the dim light, there appeared in the darkest distance a stately black form lying on the ground. It looked startlingly like a rhinoceros, but a turn of its sloping head showed it was only a nervous *gamoose* munching its food. Suddenly the end of the entrance passage was blocked by a huge man, who rushed in, announcing excitedly that Mahmoud and some one else had been fighting, and Mahmoud had torn his opponent's throat. The news disturbed one woman, but the rest preferred to hear of the Saviour's birth to the latest piece of village excitement. No doubt Mahmoud's exploits were of more frequent occurrence than the missionary's visit. But might it not also be that the One Who was born in a stable of old, much like the place where His story was being that day told, was by His Spirit holding the listeners just as the good teacher ever holds his pupils ?

This was the last visit, and it was very sad. We were brought to the house to see a woman who was very ill. So she was, poor



An Egyptian Buffalo or 'Gamoose.'

thing. There was a pitch-dark hole, very, very hot, off the dark entrance passage. It contained the oven, and on top of the oven lay the sick woman. She managed to get down by the step to the ground, and staggered into the passage, holding by the wall. She was swelled to a great size, for it was a bad case of dropsy. She could not sit on the ground, but sat on a stone ledge and poured out her tale. ‘Hopeless’ was written all over her. She had been to the dispensary; the *Hakim* had not been able to cure her; she was getting worse; the dropsy was rising in her body. What could be offered her? A kind word, sympathy, a reminder of the love of God. What else was possible? We went out to the sun and to happy Christian living; she stumbled back and crawled upon her oven. Poor, poor soul! Is she there still?

A fierce wind had sprung up on the river; the north wind and the current met, and made very rough water in their contest. It was difficult to cross again and meant much labour, but still it was done. It was a picture of the conflict of good and evil, of light and of darkness, of pride and need, of hope and despair in that *one* out of the hundreds and hundreds of Egyptian villages. Is the missionary to be deterred by such things? Surely not. She must labour on. There are more with her than against her, and week by week, in this village and in that, in richer villages and in villages far wilder than this, she must bring to the women and the girls and the little children the story of the Village Saviour.



The Town in the Desert.

CHAPTER X.

THE SCHOOL IN THE DESERT.

THE school is not an isolated building in the Desert, it is an adapted Egyptian house in the town, but the town stands in the Desert. It is unlike any other town, probably, for it is quite without suburbs, without poor people, and almost without shops. It is really like a suburb itself, but the suburb of a non-existent town. Such poorer people as may be seen in the streets or roads by day live in villages further away into the Desert. The town is composed of villas and private houses belonging almost without exception to the upper-class wealthy Egyptian families, commonly spoken of as Turkish, because many of the gentlemen are of Osmanli descent, and many of their wives are Circassians, and have therefore been Turkish subjects. This strong Turkish admixture produces a very fair skin, and though it is the exception to see blue eyes and fair hair among the children, yet they are not infrequently met.

The Desert spreads all round. Away to the east lie the spurs of the Mokattam Hills, rising in a series of low table-lands, the lower levels of which are being continuously quarried out for a valuable white building stone. Day by day, all day long, strings of leisurely camels start from the quarries with heavy slabs of stone slung on either side of their pack-saddles, and make their way due west to the river or to the railway-line ; there with many groans they reluctantly

lie down and have their loads taken off their weary ribs, grumbling bitterly all the while. It seems, indeed, with camels as with other malcontents, not to make any difference whether loads are to be taken off or put on ; whatever it is, it is all wrong anyhow, and there is nothing for it but to groan.

The river is three miles distant from the town, only a very narrow strip of green edges its banks at this part, and sand stretches between the green and the town. Look due north, it is sand too ; while in the distance some fifteen miles away a haze hangs over the great city of Cairo ; look south, and the Desert is interminable, ‘ vast ’ is the word that describes it. Desert ridges, desert valleys, desert plains, till the sky-line is reached, and on the hot days often the elusive mirage adds to the genuine desert feeling of the scene. The shining streak of the Nile winds away due south, a water-way of distances, suggesting journeys to the far-off heart of Africa, and a strong attraction for a speedy start. Away to the west across the river, beyond the palm groves and the fields, on the edge of the cultivated land, rest the line of Pyramids, nine in all, with mounds of lesser interest besides, stretching for some fifteen miles, and behind these the beginnings of the great Libyan Desert itself. This strange town is therefore dumped down right in the Desert, and it has taken to itself many of the Desert characteristics ; it is very silent, very secluded, very bare-looking, and, like the Desert, it needs to be understood. The houses look most unfriendly from the outside. Each is enclosed in a high-walled compound entered by a forbidding-looking gateway ; each house has a flat roof, and stands straight and square ; the wooden outside window shutters are tightly closed, and except for the *bawâb* who is usually to be seen sitting on a bench at the gateway chatting to a friend or sleeping gently in the heat, it would be natural to conclude that the houses were quite unoccupied. In fact, the whole town looks as if it were To LET, and that it has been To LET for so long that the house agents have despaired of letting it again, and have ceased to put up notice-boards ! This is quite a mistake, for the houses are full of life, but of the withdrawn Eastern life which it is difficult for Europeans to understand.

Shops in the Desert Town.



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The compounds, as a rule, are quite dull and dusty, but when one of the owners does care for flowers what a wonderful garden may be made! There is one which must serve as an example, though there is probably not another garden like it; it is not owned by an Egyptian family, nor yet by a Moslem; it is a garden on which no pains are spared. Roses need not be mentioned, for, like silver in the days of Solomon, they are 'nothing accounted of'; orange trees of many kinds, guava trees, mimosas (some of which, as one of the children of the garden said, are 'shy,' i.e. sensitive), fig trees, delicate-leaved fil-fil trees, are there, also violet beds, narcissus, and many unknown flowers and shrubs. In the centre is a marble basin of water arched over by delicate foliage, among which electric lamps are skilfully concealed. The basin contains gold fish of many shades, and in it are growing papyrus, lotus, and other water plants. When the lamps are lit in the evening, and throw down mysterious and graceful shadows on the water beneath, and a delicious scent fills the air, aromatic and sweet, there can be no doubt as to the unique interest of the garden. But with what pains is it made and kept! The soil has all to be fetched from the Nile banks on camels' backs, the water has to be lavishly poured out, much labour has to be bestowed. No results without efforts, is the parable of the garden; but, then, are not the efforts worth while?

Other houses might have similar gardens if their owners cared to take the trouble, the trouble of bringing the water to the sand. This is a question for the owners, not for us, however; but a vaster question concerning this town is ours, not the owners': How can the question of God's love in Christ be brought right into the square, shut up, private houses? There is at least one simple method in vogue: the potent agency of little children is employed by means of the 'English School.'

This is another ugly house, but it is less retired-looking than many, for there is a high wall round only three sides of the compound, and it can be seen distinctly from the road. A flight of steps leads up to the balcony that runs across the front, and all across this balcony, except just in the centre where the steps join it, there is a



Some of the Senior School-girls.

high wooden lattice-work screen, for the school is '*harîm*' ; it is for girls, and, according to Moslem ideas, girls must be shut away from all eyes. You walk straight into the sitting-room without any intervening hall or passage ; on either side of this are the missionaries' bedrooms ; at the back are three class-rooms ; down below are the rooms where the children eat their dinners, hang up their hats and cloaks, and wash their hands ; and out beyond the house and shut in all round is the little compound where they spend their play-time. There is probably no compound in the Desert town so happy as this ; it is dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ ; the games that they play there, the drill that they learn there, are taught them for His dear sake, and those who live in the school to teach the children never cease to pray for His holy presence and His saving power in the midst.

School begins at 8.30 a.m. with prayers, but the children, some of

them, come long before that. Imagine children in England arriving at school at 7.30 a.m., and being so sorry all the others have not come too! School is happy, that explains it. Now, these children arrive in real state. Most of them are escorted by servants, though they do not *look* in the least entitled to this grandeur, as, except for their gayer clothing and fairer skins, they are just like any other Egyptian children. It is really very droll to see these small people conducted to school by a big black Soudanese man or Soudanese woman; but it is also rather sad, for it indicates that in a Moslem land it would not be wise to let these children walk to school alone.

In the class-rooms all that is forgotten, there they are just like other children, only more so, perhaps; it is very difficult for them to understand that there is a right and a wrong way of doing anything, or to be disciplined, or methodical. None of their forefathers were, and it is difficult for the children. A mite of five, when she is naughty, will have half a dozen different expressions flitting across her face as ripples flit across a pool in as many minutes, and you see at once what a hard task it is for the mite herself or for her teacher to train that unruly little nature. But this must be said, the children are loving, and, with all their waywardness, they are most attractive and lovable. Among the girls in the school there is one who has a hard struggle with human nature; unlike all the others, she is a genuine African, with coal-black skin and crisp, curly hair. She comes to the school under peculiar conditions, for she is a little servant or slave girl in one of the best families in the town, and they kindly send her to school, where, in due time, one of her little mistresses will also come and learn beside her. She is not a slave in the sense in which we understand the word, for she and many others like her are legally quite free, but she is the descendant of real slaves who were bought and sold in the bad old days in Egypt. Slavery is all abolished now, but those who once were slaves have settled down in their owners' families, and, while they might leave if they wished, they seldom do so. The 'slave' children become the servants of the family's children in each generation, and there seems to be no difficulty in their coming to school together, as up

to a certain stage they only need similar education, and there is not the same social distinction between class and class in Egypt that there is in England. Black Topsy (this, however, is *not* her name) needs our sympathy ; her own perverse little nature and her mother's ideas of moral education combine to hinder the development of character. She had been exceptionally naughty, so much so that at last the missionary sent for the mother to see what could be done to amend Topsy's ways. The slave mother arrived from the great house in distress ; Topsy was full of weeping and confused penitence ; the whole system of education by gentle regular pressure was so foreign to her turbid little nature. So in the presence of the missionary, the interview took place. The mother poured out volumes of wrath in Arabic, there was nothing encouraging to Topsy in it, and then, with truly Oriental inconsequence, the situation was thus summed up : ' You shall repent ; I insist that you shall. You shall stand out in the middle of the room, you shall say in a loud voice to the lady, "Bardon" (corruption of *Pardon*) ; you shall repent, and when you have thus repented *I will give you a piastre (2½d.) for yourself!*' Thus is poor Topsy's mind instructed on the subject of true repentance and its profits !

Some little boys also come to school, wealthy little gentlemen who will one day take high rank in their land. A few of them seem already to have discovered skilful methods of pinching little girls on the sly during lessons, but not all of them ! A solemn and serious message, written in English, was brought one day to the school by a small boy with huge ears. His father was aggrieved : one of the girls was always pulling his son's ears, would the missionary see to the matter and prevent it henceforth ? There was no possibility of acquitting the little girl of rudeness, even though the ears in question offered attractions, but it was refreshing to find even one instance in which the male sex was not in ascendancy !

Being an upper-class school almost all the children speak French, as is the custom among the 'Turkish' families in Egypt. Some of the classes are taught in French, but as English is increasingly

used by all people in Egypt, the children have an extremely good knowledge of that, but are not yet as much at home in it as in French.

All through the morning school goes on. The whole school together has the Scripture lesson, and that is a delight to see. The Bible dull! Scripture lesson dull! Why, any one who thinks that had better come to a mission-school in Egypt and see what is thought of it there; and if they once have forty-five pairs of black eyes, and an odd pair or two of blue eyes as well, fixed on them in the Scripture lesson, and see everybody trying to answer the questions, they will learn what Scripture lessons ought to be. For the other lessons the school separates; the Kindergarten has its sand-trays, its paper-weaving, its bead-counting; the older ones their English reading, French, music, and elementary science, and, some days in the week, lessons in needlework. This is all fancy work, alas! for as the mother of one of the pupils said, ‘Why should



‘Some little Boys come to School.’

my child learn to mend her clothes ; are there not servants enough to mend them for her ?' Which all means that as these girls get older and get really shut up in a *Harîm* their lives will be quite useless and idle ; they will have nothing to think of, and only scandal to talk of, and nothing to do that will be of any use to others. The one and only hope of changing all this is to bring some new thoughts into their lives when they are young, and some new power to carry out these thoughts, and then by degrees all will be changed.

At twelve o'clock dinner comes, and this is most interesting. Again the servants appear, some with baskets and some with a delightful little affair made of enamel ware, in which four enamel bowls or saucers all fit one on top of another, and underneath is a little dish of charcoal to keep the food hot. The servants stand by and feed the children ; knives and forks are very rarely used, and spoons only occasionally. What a lot of meat they eat to be sure ! One child's dinner was first of all a dish of liver fried in oil ; next a dish of stewed chicken ; next a dish of *mish-mish*, or stewed apricots ; and last a dish of boiled rice. There was, of course, bread besides. This is the kind of meal they have three times a day, never any milk, which all Egyptians seem to dislike greatly, and never any tea. After dinner everybody's hands are washed scrupulously, and then there is play, and then there is school again. At four o'clock the servants return and fetch the children home. Imagine what a trouble we should think all these elaborate arrangements in England !

Each child attending school has his or her own *ullah*, or porous earthenware water-jar. About these all Egyptians, rich or poor, are particular. They are kept standing in a cool place, usually in an open window, and so porous are they that water is kept cool by evaporation. Egyptians are always drinking water ; the poor drink it as it is, and pour it from the *ullah* straight down their throats ; the children in the school get it filtered, and each child has a special mug to drink out of. The row of *ullahs* is quite a picturesque sight.

Children in a mission-school learn—apart from Scripture teaching and direct personal teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ—as much by method and discipline as they do from their books. Accordingly the greatest pains are taken to teach them drill, action songs, and also to march in order in and out of their classes with their very unruly small hands twisted to unaccustomed positions behind their backs. To sit upright on benches is, of course, a trial in itself, for though superseded in the best houses by costly Louis XIV. furniture, the divan, with all its possibilities of sitting cross-legged and stooped, is still the favourite. School-benches are very uncomfortable.

If you should see fifty upper-class Egyptian children doing the action song,—

‘One, two, three, one, two, three,
This is the way to swim in the sea,’

and suiting the action to the word, you know that if they *were* in the sea they would all drown immediately; but at the same moment you would realize the vital importance of the simple lesson, and

that its tendencies were all Christwards, for it and all such like methods are teaching restraint, and obedience and discipline where none exists naturally.

Perhaps when school is all over and the last child



Harim' Ladies out for a Walk.

has gone with the last servant, you may, about sunset, see some of them once more in the roads of the town, out walking with their mothers. Three or four ladies may walk out together with their faces closely veiled in white tulle or net, so that nothing but two eyes and heavily darkened eyebrows and a strip of fair forehead can be seen. These ladies will wear an outside dress of rich black satin, very baggy and loose ; it looks really like two skirts tied round the waist, one of which falls down to the feet, the other of which is turned up over the head. Indoors the ladies dress differently and wear very bright colours and most costly European dresses, and often their hair is dyed a dark chestnut-red in parts, which would be really beautiful if it were natural.

The houses have very sumptuous carpets and curtains and chairs in them oftentimes, but none of the things are associated with beauty or comfort ; strange, too, it is when there is mourning in a house to see black table-covers, black curtains, black carpets, and even black material wound round the legs of tables and chairs. Still, every nation in its private life may have just what it likes best, and all that one has any right to want to alter inside these walled-in houses is the Hope that is held for this life and the life to come. If once the Christ were known and trusted, the ladies of station would be free to live in His power, free to live happy lives for others, free to use the faculties God has given them.

The men have all the best of it in Egypt, as in any other Moslem land. They ride, they go in motor-cars, go to races, go coursing or shooting ; they drive in high dog-carts with beautiful horses ; they travel in the trains ; they have their own separate house in the compound called the *Selamlik* where they receive their friends (the lady's house in the compound is the *Harîm*) ; they go to Europe when they wish to travel, and altogether can live lives of as much pleasure as they please. The lady has none of this freedom ; she does not ride, and if she drives it is in a brougham, so that she can be little seen ; even in her brougham there will be a big black eunuch on the box beside the coachman, guarding her. If she goes in the train, it is all the same. She has to travel in a *Harîm* carriage with the shutters

shut ; secluded in this way, however, she can let down her veil and smoke her many cigarettes. Nor do her troubles end by being shut in, for in all probability her husband will have two or three other wives besides, and if she is not the favourite one her lot may not be happy. Yes, the men have all the best of it in this life, but in the life to come will they have a heavier responsibility to face because of the women whom they have degraded here ?

It is not only the upper-class children in the town who are touched, for in one of the villages in the desert there is a mission-school too



Past and Present Mission-school Pupils.

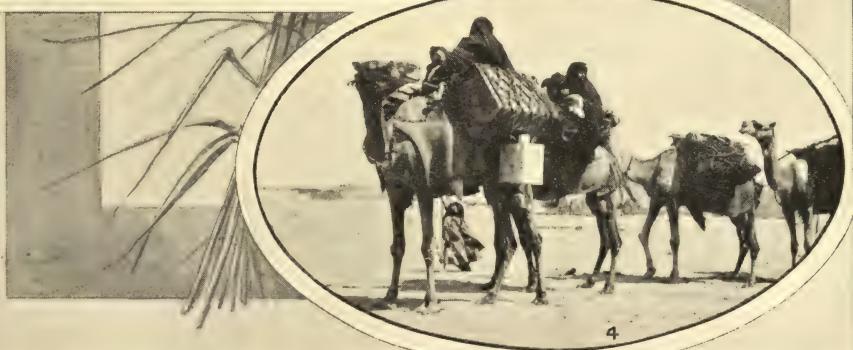
for the poorer children, who have the same care bestowed on them for exactly the same purpose. All who love and pray for these children never forget that there are other children too near by, and they watch with longing for the day when more children in more villages shall be ' suffered to come ' to their Saviour by means of more schools. If there is but a small opening in a high wall, you can only put a tiny thing through it ; and the small opening into the exclusiveness of a Moslem *Harîm* is made by the school, and the small things put through are these lovable little lady and gentleman

Moslems as they are taught of Jesus Christ ; can any one doubt what must one day follow ?

Once a year the Desert town loses its retirement and is the scene of much Moslem stir and Moslem intention and Moslem superstition. It is for three days invaded by pilgrims who gather from all parts of Lower Egypt ; these encamp in the Desert, and then on the third night go off two days' journey into the Desert on the pilgrimage proper, which is a visit to the Tomb of the Saint. He died in the Desert many years ago when returning from Mecca, and was a holy man had in much reverence. Peculiar value attaches to a visit to his tomb, especially for women, and accordingly this great pilgrimage takes place annually, and always starts for the tomb on the first full moon after the feast of Bairam.

For three days the groups assemble, coming softly across the Desert on their strangely laden camels. Fodder is slung in nets over some ; others carry great chests containing bedding, perhaps ; some who are owned by the wealthy carry tents ; all have water-tins or water-jars hanging by the sides. On top of some of the most unwieldy loads two or three or more women will be perched, besides children, and nearly always a baby ; sometimes there is a *Hartim* on a camel's back, which shows that a woman or women of higher rank are journeying also. Beside the various groups of pilgrims, one or two sheep or goats will run—unconscious victims, destined either for sacrifice at the tomb or for food by the way ; others, with some apprehension of their fate, are led unwillingly on their long march.

At last the night of the start comes, and how fantastic the beauty of the scene is ! The moon shines full overhead, the sky is inky dark, the desert almost reflects the moonlight and certainly tones its glittering strength. Multitudes of camels and people are all encamped on the soft sand in wild confusion, strangely black shadows are thrown by every figure ; little camp fires light up at intervals, showing the features of a circle of wild-looking, turbaned men ; hoarse chanting from a large group reveals the presence of real devotees, swaying their white-clothed bodies rhythmically to and fro ; guns



1.—A 'Harim' on a Camel's Back.

2.—'Across the Desert on strangely-laden Camels.'

3.—A Group of Pilgrims—a Victim led unwillingly along,

4.—Waiting for others.

are fired wildly by Bedouin who gallop round on their Arab horses. And then, evidently at some preconcerted signal, the groups begin to break up; shadowy figures lead shadowy camels; the temporarily freed sheep and goats mysteriously return to their own camels, distinguishing them somehow in the dark; group after group departs in orderly confusion. Weird cries there are, strange chanting there is, furious gun-firing continues, but never a footfall of man or of beast comes from that velvet sand. Shut your eyes in that still night, and you will imagine, in the sounds and the silence, that you are surrounded by dream people who move without noise and who therefore move without bodily presence.

As a sensation the start of this pilgrimage is unique—that long train of pilgrims, winding in single file on and on into the Desert through the still, cool nights, lighted by the ‘lesser light’ of the moon. But where are they going, and for what? This question checks the Christian and turns him abruptly from the emotion to the reality. Admit that part of the pilgrimage is *fantasia*, or pleasure-making, and that such an experience must have much variety and interest in it for those who live peculiarly narrowed lives, and you have only admitted the part that is most easily understood. The real origin of the pilgrimage as well as its object is religious; the tomb is a place for obtaining answered prayers; what does it matter if most of those prayers are sordid and material? they are the best longings of human beings who know no better, and they are all poured out at *a tomb*. And this is a picture of Mohammedanism—fervid belief, half-light, a desert track, a dead man’s tomb,—and what beyond? At least, if you were to watch the pilgrimage disappearing in its unending file into the purple dark of the southern desert, you would be impelled to respond to the poet’s plea:—

‘Oh, tell them of the Story that leads to perfect bliss,
Until that world of glory spans all the gloom of this;
And in the dawning splendour, that One Name only given,
Claims every heart’s surrender, and knits our earth to Heaven.’



Egypt's Burden-bearer.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEPTHS OF THE DELTA. (PART I.)

PYRAMIDS and temples, palm trees and desert, are the ordinary conception of Egyptian scenery; the Delta has no pyramids, no temples, no palm trees (at least in parts), and no desert. It is another Egypt altogether, another world. It is as exquisitely soft in its atmosphere and its colours, as the other, the ordinary Egypt, is clear in its outlines and brilliant in its tones; and to any one who has the chance of seeing it quietly and constantly, not as the traveller who dashes by in the train, the dreaminess of its pastoral beauty is most attractive.

The Delta is not a geographical district, it is a name given with appropriateness to that part of Egypt which is enclosed by the two branches of the Nile where they divide, about twelve miles north of Cairo, and the shape of the district so called is supposed to resemble the Greek letter Δ (Delta). It is customary now, however, to use the term Delta for the six provinces of Kalyubia,

Sharkia, Dakahlia, Gharbia, Behera, and Menufia, i.e. for all the irrigated land both between and on either side of the Damietta and Rosetta branches of the Nile.

At the point where the Nile divides a great dam, or barrage, was completed in 1890. There are in reality two dams, one thrown across each branch of the river to the tongue of land which divides them; one is five hundred yards in length, the other four hundred and fifty. Each dam is like a great bridge, but where the arches would be ordinarily there are sluices (between fifty and sixty in each dam) which are raised or lowered by machinery, so as to regulate the flow of water for purposes of irrigation and navigation throughout the Delta.

Close to the barrage three great canals start from the Nile in a northerly direction: one flows between the two branches, called the *Rayyah* (canal) Menufia; one flows on the east of the Damietta Branch, the *Rayyah* Tewfiki; and one flows on the west of the Rosetta Branch, the *Rayyah* Behera. These do not look like ordinary canals, even though they have artificial channels; they are very broad, and have a strong current flowing through them.



Boat on a great Canal.

They are, however, not more than six or eight feet deep at most, perhaps. The big boats which sail on them, with high-peaked sails, call to remembrance the Norfolk Broads. It might be said that the Delta is watered by two real rivers and three artificial rivers. Further, from these five sources, channels and drains of all sizes carry water to every spot of land that needs it, even if tremendously hard work is involved. The consequence is that the Delta is extraordinarily productive, and sustains a teeming population.

From time to time, in years past, the C.M.S. missionaries have gone into villages in the province of Menufia, with its population of six hundred and eighty thousand, and its area of six hundred and forty square miles ; they have visited the sick, opened temporary dispensaries, and have done general medical mission work.

The next development was to secure a *dahabiyeh* and moor it at various points on the larger canals for some weeks at a time, and work a dispensary on the banks. The original idea of having a dispensary on deck had to be abandoned on grounds of cleanliness ! The latest and present extension of this itinerating work is the C.M.S. medical mission House-boat, which was bought by friends and presented to the Mission, so that a more permanent and regular work might be carried on in the depths of the Delta.

An invitation to stay with the *Hakîm* and the *Hakîma* on the house-boat was altogether exciting and pleasurable. The initial excitement was that they had not as yet had a visitor there, and no one knew exactly where they were. The house-boat, with the family on board, had originally been towed to its moorings from Cairo ; a night had been spent on the way, and except for the fact that letters and telegrams apparently reached their destination and brought replies, no one could give information. It was a particularly easy invitation to accept, but not so easy to avail of ! Of three alternative routes one seemed the most secure, and though it was by far the longest, it was eventually decided on. By travelling due north from Cairo in an express train for two hours, then changing, and

travelling almost due south in a slow train for two hours more, the terminus of S—— could be reached, and then only a donkey-ride of five miles remained. This was simple, though the proverbially straight flight of the crow would have been preferable.

The express stopped at the great native town of T——, where very few Europeans are to be found in its population of fifty-eight thousand, and then sped on its way to Alexandria ; with the change of trains began the real interest because then began also the real country. Ten stations in all were passed, whose strange names alone told of new worlds. Each station had its platform covered with *fellahin*, some of whom were travellers and some sightseers ; all wore their brown felt skull-caps, black robes, and white *galabiyehs* underneath, and the excitement on each platform would have been thoroughly alarming if it had not been so thoroughly good-natured. Women were not here seen at all in the capacity of travellers.

What stretches of green separated the stations ! It is difficult to talk of it to any one who has not been in the Delta in January ; on every side, far as eye could reach, there was this expanse of green, almost transparent in the sunlight, almost liquid in the delicacy of its effect. Here and there rows of tamarisk, lebbek, mulberry, sycamore, fig, and many unknown trees brought lines of darker green into the vivid expanse of the young crops.

The beauty of the green was made the more impressive because of the want of beauty in the constant patches of brown which appeared with astonishing frequency as the eye got accustomed to noting them. These were the hamlets, villages, and small towns, scattered everywhere flatly, and teeming with people, all unknown and unvisited by messengers of Christ.

Strange visions of human life could be seen from a leisurely railway-train in those passed through. There was the partly eaten carcase of a poor old *gamoose* lying on a refuse-heap in the midst of dwellings, being gnawed by pariah dogs ; there were the women busy washing clothes in a canal—the town's water supply, and beside them were other women drawing water for use in their

homes ; the dyers in indigo were busy stretching out great lengths of woollen material to dry in the sun, with their own arms stained blue to the shoulders ; the matting-makers were busy in their rude workshops plaiting the grasses for the mats so commonly used throughout Egypt ; fat, lordly men walked about, and down-trodden women meekly followed, carrying heavy loads on their heads. The fields outside the villages were dotted with labourers, men, women, and children ; and the glimpses of the little towns revealed what, in comparison with the antiquated toil in the fields, might almost be called a reckless amount of fashion. But in both alike there was the mass of people, immortal souls, living on from year to year without any of the joy or the comfort of Christ touching their lives.

At last the terminus of S—— was reached. The fact of a lady alone descending from a *Harîm* carriage brought a little crowd to the carriage at once, but a friendly and educated messenger, who spoke broken English, was to the front, and said the *Hakîm* was delayed in the town and would come in a moment ; then, proceeding into the station building, he flung open the door of what must presumably be called the Ladies' Waiting Room !

Obviously it had never been used before (one wondered it had ever been built), and he did not seem to think it would do at all. The station-master was summoned ; he was very displeased at the state of affairs, and in needlessly voluble Arabic gave orders that it should be swept at once. There are certainly some places well worth sweeping because of the results produced, and this was one of them. A very ragged but ardent lad set to work, and out came old wooden boxes, old battery cells, large stones, papers, and *Dust*. The traveller had been given the telegraph clerk's stool, which was considerably placed opposite the door of the room, so that she might enjoy the process to the full, as all the dust and contents were swept towards her. It was all done at last to everybody's satisfaction, and in went the boy, the saddle, the stool, and the grateful object of their attention, while outside in the entrance passage went on the process of sweeping the shifted *débris* through

an opposite door against a high wind. The dust returned determinedly, the bits of revolving paper were caught skilfully on the end of the broom, but it seemed as if the wind and dust battle must go on interminably when waged in such an eddying spot, and as if waiting-rooms in the Delta were meant always to wait and not to be waited in.

Then suddenly the *Hakîm* appeared and a series of new and even more pleasurable emotions began. The *Hakîm* had his bicycle



Travellers on the Road.

all ready, so now for the donkey and the start. First of all, was it a donkey? It was such a wretched little rat of a thing, and it looked simply cruel to ride it; however, it was accustomed to far heavier loads. The English saddle was put on, and looked exactly like the roof of a Swiss châlet with its overhanging eaves. It was an entirely laughable sight. Straps were altered here and there, but, strap as you would, that saddle could not be kept from twisting, and after one final essay at departure, during which one member of the eager crowd announced that it was the wind which had blown the *sitt* (lady) over, the saddle had to be removed, and the original

little native saddle substituted. The mount was then easily effected, and the ordinary method of riding a native saddle ensured the possibility of putting a foot out on either side in case of emergency !

So the procession started along the uneven road. The donkey-boy was in proportion to his donkey—an atom indeed. He was too small to carry the bag, so he had to carry the English saddle on his head, while a bigger boy led the donkey, and the *sitt* balanced the Gladstone bag with her hands on the hump of the saddle ; there was no lack of cheerfulness except perhaps on the part of the little boy eclipsed by the English saddle. The rough road ran along the top of an embankment, and offered every facility for rolling down into or for looking across the liquid green fields. The terminus was soon left behind, but not so the people ; there were many on the road, many in the fields on either side



A Friendly Halt.



Sheikhs' Tombs on the Outskirts of the Village.

toiling away, and no agriculturalist on earth works harder than the Egyptian *fellaḥ*, seven days a week he is at it from dawn to dark with no intermission.

As the bag was heavy, and the hump round, and the saddle uncertain, it was difficult at first to look about enough, for the donkey constantly swerved as his insulted and heavily-laden owner gave him a malignant and unexpected poke, *then* the only thing to do was to grab at the neck of the boy who was leading—or else to fall off sideways like the White Knight. Suddenly the *Hakīm*, pointing to his extreme left, said, ‘That is the spot where we saw the wolf.’ Now this was utterly exciting, and a firm grip was secured on the boy’s neck, and a safe view obtained. ‘At least,’ the story went on, ‘the Natives call it a wolf, but it is more like a wild pig.’ ‘But is it really wild?’ ‘Yes, of course, but there are very few now left in the country.’ It would indeed have been something to see a wolf-pig or a pig-wolf, but this added delight was denied as we ambled along.

All the time we were getting nearer to one of those brown patches so eagerly watched from the train—a genuine Delta village. There was a Coptic church in this one as well as a mosque—an unusual thing; the Moslems were very friendly to the missionaries, as several

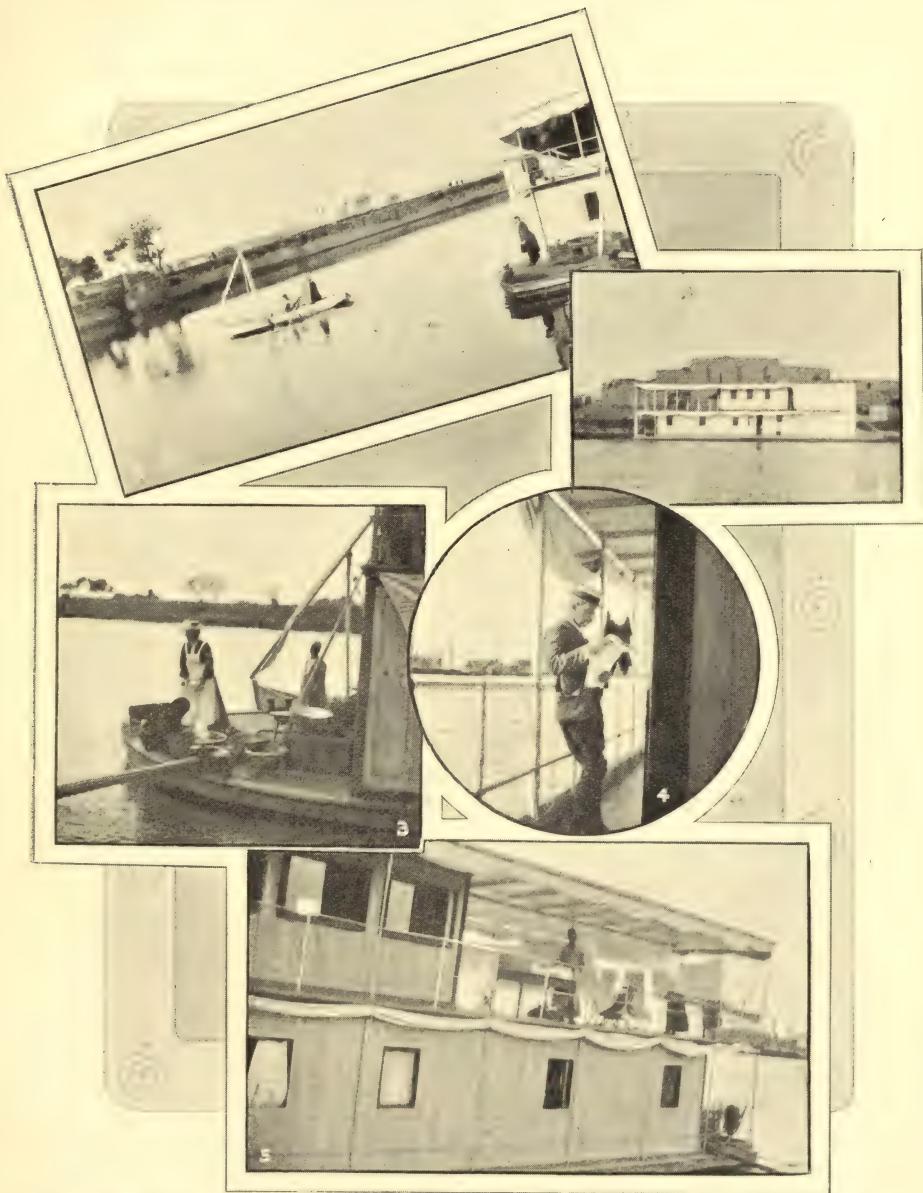
from the village, as well as from the whole district, had been successfully treated in the medical mission in Old Cairo. Several Sheikhs' tombs lay on the outskirts of the village, and there were also some of the celebrated Egyptian pigeon-towers. Multitudes of pigeons live inside these conical towers, which are so arranged for the birds that the droppings fall inside the tower, and are collected at intervals and spread on the fields as a fertilizer of the highest value. The pigeons are the property of the village, and some arrangement is made whereby the village is responsible for their feeding.

Beyond this village lay others to the right and the left, while two miles ahead lay the village of the most interest to us, for here there was a dispensary, and sure enough as we got near it there were the dispenser and the catechist walking along the path together. R— was only five minutes' ride from the canal and, therefore, from the house-boat, and there in a few moments both appeared. It was a delightful sight to come upon in the light of that afternoon sun, and the bag with its most unintentionally suitable steamer label of NOT WANTED, was handed down in a field of luscious clover, and stiff legs found something solid to rest on.

There it lay, this white house-boat, on the opposite shore, flanked by an extensive and hideous mud building ; it had a white awning, and a white boat with a white sail and white oars. Shouts of arrival from the one side brought shouts of welcome from the other, and off pushed the boat, rowed by a tiny man in a bright blue *galabiyeh*, to ferry us across.

‘Are you alive at all?’ said a cheery voice from behind the awnings. ‘More alive than ever before,’ said a voice from the boat,— and then we were on deck. There are some things too nice to speak of, and one of them is TEA on a C.M.S. medical mission house-boat at 4.30 p.m., when you have been having varied travel since 7.30 a.m., when there are home-made cakes on the table, and the flavour of an Irish welcome everywhere !

Close inspection made the house-boat more interesting than ever.



1.—Going Ashore.

2.—The House-boat.

3.—Washing Day.

5.—Drying Day.

4.—On Board.



A would-be Pariah Boarder.

There was a tiny forward deck, and below this was a cockpit in which, among nautical rubbish, the blue-gowned *raïs* or boatman (or, to confer coveted distinction, ‘captain’) slept, he being of suitable size for such a retreat. Behind this stood the kitchen, the pantry, and the cook’s cabin, in each of which it was possible for one person to stand at a time ; then there was a strip of deck leading to the gangway, and then what might be called the ‘main building,’ inasmuch as it was the house of the boat. This consisted of a tiny dining-room, two bedrooms, and one *real* cabin with a *real* bunk for visitors, present and prospective. Up above on the upper deck was the drawing-room, reached by a companion ladder. Beyond the dining-room on the lower deck was ‘the conservatory,’ in other words, a tiny bit of space was occupied by three packing-cases, and on these stood several flower-pots containing most interesting botanical specimens of plants that would not grow. There was a pink hyacinth, for instance, that had a stem as long and a flower as round as a bachelor’s button, and nothing to notice in the way of leaves. The traveller had conveyed by request a gift of horse-chestnuts from Tewkesbury Abbey also to be planted for the

replenishing of the conservatory, and, judging by the progress of the hyacinth, it would be quite possible to find space for them as they all grew up.

How beautiful the long straight line of the canal looked in the evening light running due north and south, lit up by the setting sun, which caught and gilded the sails of the passing boats, and gave the tranquil geese who were paddling across an undue importance by reflecting even their shadow.

When darkness came, down came the rain in torrents; it was mid-winter in Egypt and extremely cold. Awnings had to be taken in, and bowls provided in the drawing-room to catch the rain which poured down the pipe of the tiny stove, a coveted possession, and the only means of obtaining any warmth.

Now, to live on a house-boat has the sound of a perpetual holiday about it, but there is a good share of reality too. Housekeeping, for instance, is not easy. In the 'cold' weather, when it is possible to keep meat for two days, it is easy enough; but in hot weather, when the meat has to be found and fetched and killed and cooked all in one day, meals are apt to be irregular. Then the milk has to be fetched also from the other side of the canal twice a day, and if the messenger does happen to meet friends on the road, well—of course he must speak to them; or, if there does not happen to be a messenger to send, well—of course there's no milk. Purchasers for chickens and eggs, which commodities are proverbially plentiful in Egypt, were unknown in those remote parts, and, accordingly, the supply is spasmodic. But the bread, *that* was good—every one can get on if the bread is good? Certainly the bread is good, it comes once a week in a sack from Cairo; but, on one occasion, a mistake was made at the railway station and the bread was sent a hundred miles in the wrong direction—so—well, there was no bread, that's all.

The bread would supply a capital text for a sermon on 'missionary extravagance.' 'I know for certain an instance in which *hot bread* is frequently found on a missionary breakfast-table, the statement cannot be denied!' No, nor can it. When the bread is five days

old the loaves are re-baked, and this greatly helps to disguise the sourness ; this is the extravagance.

Then comes the washing. The old woman who does the first part looks as if she needed to be herself the subject of the process, but with careful inspection she is somewhat useful. But who does the ironing ? Now these are household questions into which we have no right to pry, but certain it is that the nice table-cloth was not finished off by the old washerwoman ! And the cooking ? Well, to say the least, that needed a great deal of superintending ; cook and housemaid all in one, and a peculiar disposition to boot, do not conduce to family comfort. But, after all, these are incidentals, tiresome enough in all conscience when so little time can be given them, and the *work* of the day is missionary.

Undoubtedly the *ghaffir* or watchman was the picturesque figure of the house-boat. He appeared at sundown, a tall, wild-looking young Bedouin with beady black eyes full of irrepressible mischief and humour ; his big black cloak hung gracefully from his broad shoulders as he strode along with mercilessly strong steps, and his close brown cap set off his clear-cut features.



A Watchman's Hut.

‘What can a watchman be wanted for?’ was the natural question.

‘Why, to keep away robbers, of course,’ was the prompt response.

‘But how does he do it?’ was the next question.

‘He will sit all night on the deck outside your door with his gun, and if anything alarms him, he will fire it off.’

‘Does he really stay awake?’

‘Oh, yes, always till about two o’clock in the morning, and he coughs occasionally to show the robbers he is watching.’

‘And when do the robbers usually rob?’

‘Oh! any time after two o’clock when they know he is asleep!’
(Oh! delicious sensation to be as near the reality as that!)

‘Then what is the use of having him at all?’

‘It is compulsory; the headman of each village has to provide watchmen to take charge by night of all in his district, and is held responsible for the safety of the people, and this district has had a bad name for robbers.’

‘But what on earth is there for any one to steal out here?’

‘Goats,’ was the solemn answer, ‘and chickens also, and they are killed and eaten before the morning.’ There really was nothing monotonous on the house-boat, so far!

That evening, as the rain poured outside in its dreariest and coldest way, and the little party sat in the drawing-room on the upper deck, bang! went Abdullah’s gun; bang! again. The robbers had not come, but his powder had got wet. Later on, coming down to bed, there was the young giant pouring fresh powder into his old muzzle-loader and ramming it home with pieces of paper by means of a cane. When this process was finished by the dim light of the deck lamp, down sat Abdullah on the deck and gave a large COUGH—his official duties had begun. In the early night he coughed again and again, in varying tones of suffering and reproof; in the early morning he coughed no more. As the grey dawn began to break, a careful peep revealed a black cloak piled on the deck; no arms, no legs, no head were visible; and a gun

leaned against the rail eight feet away from the cloak—which was all that remained of Abdullah!

There was mission work to be done on the boat as well as on the shore among these three Moslem men, the cook, the boatman, and the watchman. Each day they came in to family prayers; the *Hakim* read from the Bible and taught them. The watchman and the boatman, being quite unsophisticated, broke in with frequent interjections of approval and comment; the cook, more accustomed to European ways, listened attentively and silently, and when the time for prayer came he even took off his *tarbush* and kneeled down, while the other two sat up rigidly on their chairs and showed a kindly interest in the proceedings. These men accompanied the *Hakim* at night also when he went out preaching with his magic-lantern in the villages round, and there also they learned of Christ. But not even could that tiny house-boat in that vast province be claimed for Christ wholly, for night by night three Moslems slept on board, and never could any one get away from the one great purpose of its being there, no, not for one moment. The depths of the Delta offer no respite from work, no ceasing of responsibility; everywhere, all round, and always, there are those in multitudes who need the Christ Who is seeking their souls through the missionaries.



Off to a Patient—‘Hakim’ and ‘Rais.’



Delta Children.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEPTHS OF THE DELTA. (PART II.)

IT is quite certain that social advantages would not attract residents to this particular part of the Delta any more than housekeeping facilities, still there were just a few noteworthy neighbours. First in interest came the rich man, the owner of the large mud house close to which the boat was moored. He reputedly had an income of £1,000 a year, and was able to support three wives, for one of whom he kept another house in a city. He was a really important person in the neighbourhood, as he owned much land and many farms, and naturally he and his doings afforded many topics for conversation to the party on the boat. He was very fond of receiving medical treatment from the *Hakim*, though in connexion with that his wealth was not apparent; however he sometimes lent a donkey when there was special need, and he certainly was friendly.

Next in local interest to the rich man was the *Baboor*. Now a *Baboor* is not a person, it is a thing, or, to speak more correctly, it is in Egypt *any* thing that is worked by steam, for the word is a corruption of the French *vapeur*. A *Baboor* may be a steamer or a train, or a mill; in this case it was a mill for grinding flour, and the rich man owned it. It stood near his house with its ugly chimney, and it

was always hooting. It hooted before it began work, it hooted when it wanted more corn to grind, it hooted when it was going to stop; all this hooting made it a most civilized and cheerful neighbour, for it suggested great bustle, express trains, and motor-cars.

From miles round, the women, always the women, walked with



'The Women walked with Loads of Grain on their Heads.'

heavy loads of millet or maize or other grain on their heads to the *Baboor*, for in this, as in other parts of Egypt, the *Baboor* is replacing the old grinding-stones. They stood in order before a weighing-machine, duly presenting the contents of their baskets; they then passed on with the empty baskets, and held them in turn under the little mill itself, receiving the flour back from the sloping mouth. It

must have taken many of the women quite half a day to visit the *Baboor*, but perhaps it had some of the pleasure of an excursion in it.

The next nearest neighbours, living between the *Baboor* and the rich man's house, were a Bedouin family. They lived in their tent on a heap of dust at the rich man's gate, but they certainly did not look as if they were fed with the crumbs which fell from his table. The woman ran out as we passed, pleading for a charm. She had an ailment—she knew the *Hakîma* could help her: if a guinea



The Rich Man's House and the Bedouin Woman's Tent.

(Egyptian for a sovereign) might be put into water she would then drink the water and be cured, and this would mean life to her tiny little baby. The *Hakîma* explained why charms were no use against illness, but the woman pleaded for a cure for what was really irremediable in the conditions in which she lived. *Inshallah!* If the Lord will! So it had to be left, and then, though we only meant to look in, she begged us to crawl in to her tent, and on the guests' piece of matting we sat down.

There was nothing inside that one liked to see, except a solemn goat and a lively kid, and there were a good many *little* things one would rather not have seen so plainly! But it was *home* to that woman and her gaunt husband and her little baby, this bare, dust-floored tent. We asked her had the rain come in the night before, and she proudly said no. Had she not made the sheep's hair tent-cloth herself? Evidently she was skilled in this kind of weaving, for there were several pieces of similar stuff woven in coloured strips lying in a heap in one corner. She wished to show them to us, so she quite simply handed the pitifully tiny, wasted mite in its pitifully unclean rags to the *Hakîma*, who as simply and as tenderly took it and held it as if it were her own. It all happened quickly and naturally, but just as quickly came the thought, Could any one who did not love the Lord Jesus Christ and all for whom He died have done this little act as a matter of course? Assuredly not, nothing but love would have touched with gladness that poor little object, and would have touched it *instantly*, without shrinking. It is no use to think of being a missionary unless your heart is full of love to God.

A few words were said about this same love to the woman herself, and then a stooping exit was made to the refuse-heaps outside and the skulking dogs were safely passed. These were 'the neighbours.'

The rich man's cocks began to crow at dawn, and that showed it was time to get up; so back was pushed the wooden shutter of the little cabin. In the misty, indistinct light, on the bank of the canal some ten feet higher than the window, standing in the young green

corn, was such an odd figure, a youth dressed in a kind of striped sacking ; he was not a robber, nor yet had he been robbed, as his bandaged head might have suggested. He was just an early patient, that was all.

Clearer light showed two more figures, one of them a woman, one a girl. There they all were gazing at the gangway connecting the boat to the bank, and, judging from the sounds proceeding from the



'The White
Boat
carried us
across.'

Getting ready
to start.



house-boat end of the gangway, they could get no further ! There was some point in dispute between the *raïs* and the patients. Here is the explanation. The early patients were Egyptians as well as patients, and their early endeavour was to beg the *Hakîm*, contrary to all etiquette, to row them across the canal in his nice white boat so that they could get to the dispensary free of expense, and avoid paying the fraction of a penny which was charged by the old chain ferry-boat which glided backwards and forwards under the shelter of the *Baboor*.

Now the *raïs* did not like dirty, dewy feet on the deck, nor did he



The Dispensary near the House-boat.

like more rowing than was necessary, and besides it was contrary to rules—hence the controversy. But importunity prevails in the East, and by the breakfast time at seven o'clock permission was given by the *Hakîm*, and with peculiar rapidity the victorious three swept into the white boat, placidly accepting the decided statement of 'Never again.'

Then came breakfast, and after it prayers ; then a little bit of time for quiet, and then the dispensary at R——. Once again the white boat carried us across with the *Hakîm*, and we reached the two rooms and half the yard of a native house which formed the dispensary.

There was quite a group outside the door, and there were several donkeys on which rich men had ridden. The door was very stout, and it was stoutly defended by a man with a stout stick ; this was necessary in R——, for method, punctuality, and manners (according to our ideas) are but dimly understood there yet. The *Hakîm* has to refuse to admit patients who come after 9 a.m., unless the cases are very urgent, or unless they pay a fee for admission, as otherwise every one would come late for the service which precedes the dispensary.

So we got in, and there was the doctor's little table, with its

papers, little row of bottles for eye-dressings, all ready for him in the entrance passage ; on the left was the surgery, full of bottles, medicines for dispensing, surgical instruments, bandages, sterilizers, and such like. ‘We are only just beginning to get it tidy, as it is all new,’ the native dispenser explained. On the opposite side of the entrance passage was the women’s—well, *room* is perhaps the safest word to use, though it did not look very like one at first. In fact it did not look like anything at all, because you could not *see* anything, your eyes were useless, but your nose suddenly felt obliged to do double work.

In went the missionary happily into the dark, however, and soon, by twisting open the wooden shutter, eyes could do more in the light and nose less as the pure air rushed in ! There were a lot of women in there, and they were cold, and so of course they had shut the shutter tight and had a happy time waiting for the *sitt*. She sat down at once in the middle of them all and began her teaching. Meantime, all the men patients were sitting round the yard, and the catechist was addressing them earnestly.

Half the yard belonged to the Mission and was clean, the other half belonged to the landlord and was not. The geese, the donkey, and the buffalo were all in a paradise of mud, but all the poultry seemed to be compressed into an old mud oven, and one could not wonder they were asking to come out. Now in just such a part as this, and under circumstances exactly like these, the victories of our Lord Christ are being won. It is not on the great battle-fields of the world, but in the back-yards of the world that much of His best work is being done, and that space in that remote village is one of the holy places of this earth, for there once more comes the old message, ‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’

When the little service was over several of the Egyptian anæmia patients were pointed out ; there was one with a ghastly pallid face, another with a healthy brown skin, but a *quite* white tongue which it pleased him greatly to show, there was another whose eyelids were white, but he looked otherwise healthy, these were instances of various stages of disease ; and there was yet another, a fine-looking

young man, who, knowing that iron was good for the disease, had been getting for himself little lumps of refuse iron from the blacksmith and swallowing them! He looked none the worse for it!

Then it was time to go and to leave the *Hakîm* to his medical work, and his personal talks with the people, and never again did we see him till after 5.30 p.m.; for his whole days are spent in the dispensaries, and then in the intervals he is summoned to cases and accidents in the district too serious to be brought to him. Back

A Temporary
Dispensary.



Addressing
Dispensary
Patients.

across the canal again to pick up the *Hakîma*, and then a perfectly delicious walk on a narrow track for about a mile to the big village of T——, where there was another dispensary.

Wait till you walk through the Delta to know what pastoral beauty is really like! The young clover, the young corn, the young beans were vivid with light; the sky was deepest blue and arched; the fields were flat with occasional rows of lebbek and feathery tamarisk trees; the water was murmuring in the tiny channels so skilfully arranged at various levels; the women and girls, dressed in

black, came in groups and in strings along the paths, balancing their big baskets of grain on their heads, all bound for the *Baboor*, the little boys going nowhere in particular after the manner of little boys; and what salutations and greetings were exchanged with all these simple villagers!

The *Hakîm* was greatly beloved here, and besides this, many of the people have been treated in the medical mission in Old Cairo; no wonder, therefore, that the greetings were effusive. There was much hand-shaking and salaaming, and a favourite salutation, ‘May your days be like milk,’ was often intensified into ‘May your days be like the cream of the milk.’ Indeed, judging by the poor shy, ribby old buffaloes who were terrified at passing us on a narrow path, one would not have thought there could be much difference between the milk and the cream, except in a traditional sense.

But the green around and the blue above, the strange crops and the strange cattle, the black-dressed women and the half-clothed children, the friendly affection and the opposing religions, all made a series of contrasts that do not often come into a morning’s walk; the destination was the climax of all. There it was, brown as brown, and on its very outskirts a little crowd rushed to the *Hakîma*, and gathered round her. ‘When would the *Hakîm* come again?’ ‘When would the dispensary open again?’ ‘To-morrow, to-morrow is the day.’ But even so, off must come a cap from a boy’s head to show it to the *Hakîma*, who this time wisely only touched his shoulder; this little girl with eyes closed tight with disease and dirt must show them also, and a woman must show a lump, and so on. It was all very friendly, and the *Hakîma* urged nine o’clock to-morrow morning at the dispensary and then said she was going to call on the Omdeh’s wife.

Every one was willing in the village streets to show the way to the *Beit el Omdeh*, and through a discouraging amount of mud it was reached. An Omdeh is the headman of a village; he is appointed by the Government, and it is a coveted office. He has to keep order in his village and district and co-operate with the distant police in case of the committal of a crime; he can



The Family Room in the Omdeh's House.

never leave his district even for a very short time unless he appoints an agent to take his place; altogether he is a very important man. In return for his services certain taxes are remitted, he is given a large house to live in, and, best of all, his sons are freed from serving in the army. The system on the whole works well, and among the Omdehs are many really capable men.

Being only women, we had to hurry through the courtyard where there were lots of men on business whom it would have been delightful to watch. The great man was not there himself, but his agent or his uncle hastened forward, and courteously showed us the way first to the big downstairs family room with mysteriously dark corners and its quite dark oven—the family sleeping-place in cold weather, and on top of which the *Hakîma* once was asked to sit, gasping for air and blinking for light, when paying a

visit. We were then hurried up to the much less interesting guest-room on the upper story, and there we all sat down on the floor, a servant-woman, three grown-up daughters, and two little children.

Soon the Omdeh's wife came in—and what a nice woman she was! dignified, kind, and most decided, obviously one who could order a big household well. She was so pleased to see the *Hakîma*, and then, after all the salutations and courtesies were exchanged, began the real work. The *Hakîma* read from her Bible, she explained, she talked, she understood; sometimes the Omdeh's wife and she held hands as they talked eagerly to each other. The subject was prayer, and the Omdeh's wife, unlike most Moslem women, prayed sometimes, she said; and the missionary taught about real access to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and who knows how near was the Hearer of all prayer at that very moment? To one present it seemed sure He was 'in the midst.'

Well, the visit had already lasted more than an hour, and unless your knees and ankles are well trained you find you have a lot of new bones and muscles when you have been sitting on a stone floor for an hour! We tried (in two senses!) to get up to go; the Omdeh's wife literally shouted, she clapped her hands, she rubbed them quickly together as if they were cymbals; the *Hakîma* smilingly protested and rolled on to her knees, but the Omdeh's wife made more and more noise, and the *Hakîma* cheerfully subsided on to the floor again and said in a low voice, 'A feast is coming!' How the visitor's heart trembled at this, but there was the feast itself coming in at the door on a very large circular brass tray.

The servant and the daughters withdrew to the doorway, a small stool was set between the *Hakîma*, the Omdeh's wife, and the visitor, and the brass tray was placed on this. In the centre of the tray was an enamel dish full of eggs fried in semna (a coarse-tasting oil), round this was a dish with a slab of milk-white cheese on it, a dish with a slab of coffee-coloured cheese (very old and dainty), a dish of pickled cabbage, a dish with brown-looking syrup (honey really), and on the outer edge of the tray ten pieces of native bread (about

the size and thickness of a dinner-plate cut in half) neatly put two and two.

The names of the things are quite delicious as you read, but somehow the things did not look so nice as they sound, and the visitor's heart sank again as she dreaded alike the consequences of eating the food or refusing the hospitality. She confided her distress to the *Hakîma*, and begged her to explain to the lady that she got a pain in her chest when she ate food. Swiftly the Omdeh's wife darted a question to the *Hakîma* which was most gravely translated : 'The lady asks whether the *Hakîm* gave you medicine last night for that pain.' Oh, resourceful Omdeh's wife ! What a mercy it was to be able to say that the visitor had had a medicine the night before, for had she not between the watchman's coughs got up and got herself a digestive tabloid ! So the crisis passed. Anxious to please and yet afraid to eat, the visitor, seeing an orange on a shelf, said she could eat oranges without a pain, and she thought of the nice clean way they lived inside their own skins. All was eager pleasure to grant her wish—though it was not fully understood, for that orange and two others were torn open on the lap of one of the party sitting at the door, every flake was separated, dropped in a very juicy state on the rough black dress, and finally put on a soup-plate which was placed in front of her on the tray !

Meantime the Omdeh's wife broke off a piece of bread, mashed up one of the eggs in the oily dish with it, gave it an adroit whisk, caught up a goodly portion of the rich mixture, and got both safely into her mouth. The *Hakîma* did the same, and very deftly too, for a close observer could see that she took up more egg than oil. On went the feast; presently the *Hakîma* took a pinch of cheese with her fingers, and ate it, so did the lady of the house—a good big pinch too, but she put it into the oil-egg dish, made another mixture and another mouthful. The pickled cabbage was a delicacy, and as the visitor ate orange, it did seem strange she would not eat cabbage ! The honey was the final course, and with this again the *Hakîma* rose to the occasion and dipped her bread into the syrup. The feast was over, the tray was handed to those at the door, who began to eat up

all the food, water was brought in a vessel, a tin dish was placed on the floor, our hands were held over it, each was rubbed by the servant with native soap, water was poured over them,—and they were dried in the sun !

We went downstairs with our kind hostess, through the dark ‘kitchen,’ under brown rafters, over uneven floors, past crumbling walls, out at last by another door into the pure, sweet air and near



A Group
in a
Delta
Dispensary.



Winning the
Boys.

the radiant green fields. Quite a little way did our hostess and her party come with us, and many times we turned round, after parting, to wave hands to each other ; there seemed to be a real link between us, she was a woman, we were women ; she was a Moslem, we were Christians ; she had received us freely, we went to tell her of One Who would receive her freely, and we would not be likely to forget each other for His dear sake.

That night, at half-past seven, the *Hakîm*, the catechist, the dis-

penser and the magic-lantern, accompanied by two watchmen—the Omdeh's orders—set off for the village for an evening meeting; but it was very cold, and when they got there after eight o'clock all the people had gone to bed; and though a generous offer was made to wake the village up, the *Hakim* would not consent, and returned at half-past nine to his boat. It was a 'long day' for him, and all his days are like it. The visitor had brought a newspaper from Cairo telling of strikes in Russia, and when the long day was done the *Hakim* read it, and confessed next morning he had had a nightmare from the unwonted excitement of the news!

The return journey to the train was made on a bigger donkey, with the English saddle and a big boy to run beside, and Abdullah, the watchman, as escort. This time it was he and the bag who fared ill. He had neither bridle nor saddle, and the bag was balanced in front of him, but he had a long stick. He beat his donkey's head mercilessly, and laughed at the visitor's Arabic which had been stocked by her for selfish and not for benevolent purposes, and was under the circumstances useless. But the misused donkey arranged matters for himself, for by some adroit twist when galloping along, off went Abdullah, bag and all, on to the embankment road and down into a clover-field, and the donkey stood still in meek surprise. The donkey did it very well, for Abdullah was only dazed, not injured, and the journey was resumed and the station reached.

As the train went on slowly first through sunshine, then through storm and a glorious double rainbow, then through the dark night, it was not the pleasures nor the beauties nor the quaintnesses that rose uppermost in memory; but the thud, thud, thud of the engine said very clearly, Multitudes, Life, Love. Those fields would soon be as golden as they were now green, for the harvest comes quickly; the water would go on trickling in and out among the crops; the sun would get hotter and hotter; the population would increase. But how many more messengers of Christ would go into the depths of the Delta to love people to His Cross?



The Governor's House, Khartoum.

CHAPTER XIII.

WATCHING, OR KHARTOUM AND ONWARDS.

THROUGH long and weary days of fading hopes, Gordon, the Christian hero, stood on the roof of his house in Khartoum and strained his eyes northward along the stretch of the great river, *looking for the help that never came*. When he fell, death and desolation ruled in the Soudan. Was it inevitable that the succour never reached him? Was it due to dilatory tactics? Was it due to lack of grasping the crisis in the conflict? No one, perhaps, can decide these things, but at least a mark has been left on the conscience of a nation. The help came at last, but too late for the one who needed it most; his death drew forth the response that was denied to him in life. Reparation, though tardy, has been made; peace has been restored; slowly the grim work of death is being overcome in depopulated regions; commerce is recommencing; already the engineers are engaged in irrigating vast tracts of devastated country. This is political and social, but consider what is spiritual.

Then Khartoum was held in the Mahdi's grip, and the latest successor of Mohammed had his will. To-day, the copper globe

and crescent which surmounted his tomb rest in a Christian house. His overthrow—or rather what was represented in his overthrow—is surely final. Very slowly, as was found possible and held to be wise, have Christian Missions again touched Khartoum, first with medical work, then with educational work. It is not yet a free field, but none the less the Cross is once more lifted by those who rejoice to stand beneath its shade, and Khartoum is now the outpost of the C.M.S. Egypt Mission, with its girls' school of over one hundred pupils.

Soon must that same place be not so much an outpost as a base for the Soudan. Once more eyes are strained as they watch for succour. Vast regions stretch southwards to the equator, all unevangelized, occupied by Pagan and Moslem tribes, and loud is the call from many voices *to come before it is too late.* Is this ever to



The Blue and the White Nile below Khartoum.

be the pathetic message from Khartoum, first to a nation, next to a Church? Shall the Church be as slow now as the nation once was to perceive the crisis?

The river flows silently, steadily on past the walls of the town; the sun shines radiantly on its sandy banks, each absolutely faithful to its mission day after day. Where are those who will learn from them that life and light can be conveyed to the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan through human channels? And where also are those who have eyes to see yet Another Who watches over Egypt and the Soudan, and will say to Him,—

‘And deign, O Watcher with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning, deign reply,
Is there, oh, is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?’

‘Are there no briars across the pathway thrust?
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wouldst deign to trust
My hands to gather out?’





A distant View of Cairo.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORK AMONGST MEN AND BOYS.

BY THE REV. R. MACINNES.*

GOD, Abraham, Joseph, Michael, Satan. God, Abraham, Joseph, Michael, Satan. God, Abraham, Joseph, Michael, Satan.' Whatever does it all mean? It would take some time to guess. These words were being diligently repeated one day by an old man in our hospital at Old Cairo. They were his method for finding out whether an operation which

* [It does not fall to the lot of a woman to gain much direct contact with special missionary work among boys and men in a Moslem country constituted as Egypt is. It is easy, no doubt, to pick up second-hand knowledge and to be tempted to deduce too much or too little from it; but given a desire for sincerity and the best approach to accuracy that is attainable for any record of work done, it is wiser to have recourse to those who can speak from directly acquired knowledge. The Rev. Rennie MacInnes, who is an honorary missionary and Secretary to the C.M.S. in Egypt, has supplied the inevitable deficiency by writing this chapter.—M. C. G.]

he wanted the doctor to perform would be successful or not. Unluckily, the doctor was not willing to operate at all; it was too risky, because of the patient's age.

'You only want to frighten me,' was the old man's reply to all the doctor's reasonings, 'I *will* be operated upon.' Two days later, however, he had entirely changed his mind, and his one desire was to escape from the hospital as quickly as he could! Wherefore this change? He had been counting his beads, and as he passed them through his hands he repeated these names: 'God, Abraham, Joseph, Michael, Satan.' He decided that if the last bead fell upon one of the first three names the operation would be a success, if upon either of the two last a failure. But though he began to count at many different places, the last bead always favoured Satan (he apparently didn't see that, as the number of beads had not changed, this was quite natural), and hence his hasty departure from the hospital.

Surely this little incident speaks loudly enough for all to hear! It contains many of the reasons which cause a hospital or dispensary to be one of the first methods of work adopted by any Christian Mission in its endeavour to preach to those who have never heard before the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The suspicion, the ignorance, the persistence, the superstition of this old man were all jumbled up together, and through them all there stands out clearly the strong sense of need. Would that I could tell you of a sequel; but, even though it has not in this case yet occurred, it may still do so; for the patient may return, and, as has often happened in other cases before, if he stays long enough to hear, and watch, and know, his suspicion will give way to confidence, his ignorance will be enlightened by teaching, his persistence will (even without the longed-for operation) very likely be rewarded; and his superstitious use of a string of wooden beads may be replaced by a steady faith in his Father in heaven Who will listen to the simple prayer of His earthly child.

Medical work was thus one of the first methods adopted a few years after the C.M.S. resumed work in Egypt in 1882, and it has

been carried on with increasing interest and effectiveness ever since. Apart altogether from the dispensary, to which hundreds of men come every month, there are often at one time 150 men, sometimes many more, as in-patients in the hospital at Old Cairo. Far from having the Gospel 'thrust down their throats with the medicine,' the vast majority listen to it with interest and pleasure, and in many ways show us that this same Gospel is as able to supply the deepest needs of their souls as it has ever been. They are quite capable too of appreciating this practical Christianity, and constantly comments are heard which show that this silent testimony to the love of Christ is not without effect:—'What treatment we receive at the hands of these infidel Christians!' 'Show me the Moslem who will care for sick strangers as these Christians care for us.' 'If I go elsewhere, I am perhaps asked to pay some shillings for a five minutes' interview; but here the doctor sits before us, asks us all about our illness, and where we come from; reads and explains God's Word to us; prays with us; in fact loves us; and we Moslems know nothing about loving and serving others, for we do not know how to love and serve among ourselves.'

There is no doubt that an immense influence has been exerted far and wide through Lower Egypt by our medical work during the last sixteen years. In remote villages we are certain of a welcome from many of those who have been treated and who have received good at the doctor's hands. One day, as I bicycled with the senior doctor along a dusty track, several miles from where he was then at work, a shout of delight hailed him from a number of men at work upon a broken water-wheel. With one consent they left their work and ran up to us. One seized my machine (which he didn't the least know how to hold or what to do with next), another took the doctor's, and then were there thrust upon him by one a diseased hand, by another a sore leg, and all these ailments he was expected to recognize at once as old friends. I strongly maintain that the work of faith and labour of love to which our doctors and nurses have given all their strength these many years have accomplished more for the regeneration of Egypt than has hitherto been recog-

nized. And in addition to what has thus been effected in the direction of civilization, and physical and moral betterment, there have also been sown the seeds of a widespread spiritual harvest, which, though slower in preparation, is even more certain to come to perfection, and will be reaped in due season.

The boys' schools provide us with other means to the same end. Just as the medical work has its place in breaking down opposition, and securing a hearing for the message, so our schools also have their place in building up the minds and characters of the coming generation. We try to do this not merely by filling the boys with the right proportions of arithmetic, history, geography, and grammar (there are plenty of schools better qualified to do that), but by teaching them from the Book of books, and opening to them the mysteries and ideals of the Christian life.

In a great city like Cairo, the task of educating the boys is, for us, a heavy one. The Government has built and equipped numerous first-class schools all over the town; they are under the efficient management of English masters, with plenty of native assistance; and hundreds of boys every year successfully pass the various Government examinations.

It might be thought that a mission-school, with its limited staff and restricted means, could not possibly hope to compete with such a standard. And indeed it is an undertaking of great difficulty; but, although we are keeping a watchful eye and an open mind on the subject, we do not see at present sufficient reason to warrant our introducing any radical change.

What, then, is our reason for carrying on this school work? It is that we are very firmly convinced that it is not the Gospel of Education alone which is capable of giving to this land once more a leading place amongst the nations of the world. Education can raise people to a certain height, but no higher; it is the handmaid of religion, not its substitute. We know that the Government is a Moslem Government, but still we regret that in a country originally Christian (which would be Christian to-day were it not for the sword of Islam), and where one-tenth of the population is Christian

still, no teaching of the Bible or of Christianity is allowed in any Government schools, even to the Christian boys.

We cannot be too thankful for the noble example given in these Government schools by many of the English masters and mistresses, and for the effect that their Christian lives have had in many cases (though they are not allowed to speak of religion in school) upon their watchful pupils. But nevertheless we make it our aim to remedy, as adequately as our means will allow, what we feel to be a grievous defect in the system, and so we devote the first lesson every day to the teaching of the Bible, and classes are also held on Sundays, and voluntarily attended by many of the boys.

Another opening of which we have recently availed ourselves is a class for deaf and dumb boys. I do not know of any other like it in Egypt. The master in charge of it is well qualified to teach these poor boys, and the progress they have made is remarkable. Many of the parents, when asked to send their sons to be taught, reply that it is not possible for the deaf to hear or the dumb to speak, and consequently they are astonished when they see what has been actually effected. It is a privilege to us to be the means of brightening the blank lives of these neglected children.

Hitherto it has been on the girls' side of the work that more actual baptisms have been recorded than in any other branch (though baptisms are not all that we go by), but with the increased attention that we have lately been able to give to the boys, may we not hope that they too will emulate their sisters, as they press toward the mark?

The medical and the educational lines of effort appear to us to be worth pursuing, not merely because of what we have already effected by their means, but also because our Lord Himself has set us the direct example, for He went about all Galilee 'teaching . . . and healing.' We do not however forget that, with these means, the Master invariably coupled a third—the direct preaching of the Kingdom.

It may be judged whether or no it is worth while trying to preach the Gospel in Cairo, when I state that a man who first came in to

our meeting-place, some years ago, in order to break the lamps and make a row, is now one of our most effective speakers, and is daily proclaiming to others the joy of his faith in Christ crucified.

There are meetings for all classes of the community. At one place, on a main thoroughfare, an audience is gathered in every week, of all sorts and conditions of men; the majority of them are of the poorer classes, and uneducated, but some of them attend very regularly, and follow with keen interest the successive subjects which are brought before them by means of pictures and a magic-lantern.

At another good centre, the house where two of our clerical staff live, they have reached a very much wider circle, and one of a completely different kind, for it consists mainly of the students in the Government schools and colleges, and of *effendis* or educated men, while it also includes a good number of *sheikhs* or students from the university-mosque, El-Azhar.

Throughout the greater part of the year a weekly meeting is held in a large hall at this house, and a lecture is given on some social, moral, or intellectual subject. This is often followed by a debate, which is eagerly carried on in Arabic or English, and most interesting have been some of the expressions of opinion brought out at these gatherings.

The complement of this series is another set of meetings, in the same place, and attended by many of the same men, at which definitely religious subjects are chosen, and Bible-teaching is given a prominent place. I have watched 120 men listening in the most profound silence while the speakers showed them, by means of a striking series of pictures, the analogy between the story of Abraham and Isaac, and the True Sacrifice. I think it was the following week that one of the audience rose, and called on all true Moslems to follow him out of the hall; but beyond turning their heads to watch him and his friend depart, none of the rest stirred, and presently all the faces were directed once more to the picture on the screen.

At times, when debates on religious subjects have been permitted,

it has not been by any means easy to keep them in order. But by firm and yet sympathetic chairmanship much can be done, and there is no doubt that both sides have gained immensely by the close touch into which this interchange of opinions has brought them.

Under this same heading I should like to say that we keenly feel the value of literature as an evangelistic agency, and with this in view we publish and distribute in the course of the year many thousands of copies of tracts and pamphlets, besides selling several thousands of Bibles, portions, and religious books at our Book Depôt, or by the aid of colporteurs.

It is with this same object that two of the missionaries have been publishing a weekly magazine called the *Orient and Occident*. Many of the articles are in English only, many in Arabic, but some are printed in both languages, and this, in addition to the illustrations, is an attraction to many of the subscribers. The paper has already found its way into most of the large towns of Egypt, besides many of the smaller ones, while some copies are also taken in by subscribers in the Soudan and other countries.

Pastoral work is not neglected for those who have at last realized the falseness of their former faith, with its utter inability to satisfy their needs or save their souls, and have been baptized into the Church of Christ. Let me tell of the way we dealt with one such, and we shall not be blamed for hastily accepting a convert, or lightly leaving him afterwards to his own devices.

After long thought and by strange paths this man was led to us, and appeared one day in the hospital compound, asking the doctor to baptize him. He could neither read nor write, and although remarkable from the first for his keen and earnest spirit, we were so anxious not to reap before the harvest was ripe, that it was not until a year later that we baptized him. He learnt to read, and, with hard labour, to write. After two years of instruction he was confirmed. It was my privilege to prepare him for the service, and it will be long before I forget all that I learnt from him during those few weeks.

He himself acknowledged that the time of training and testing

had been of great value to him, but it is worthy of note that three years elapsed between the time he first came to us, eager to be baptized, and the day (Easter Sunday, 1905) when he was at length admitted to the Holy Communion. It was for him, and for the others who were admitted that day for the first time, as well as for us, a holy and a happy day.

I should like to tell of another great interest to us, which was brought to pass two days later. Another Moslem convert, who had been baptized a year earlier, was married that day to a former probationer in the hospital. She, too, was a convert from Islam, and even in the history of so strange a land as Egypt, I do not suppose that such an event has often been witnessed before. May this event prove to be as full as we deem it now of happy augury for the future, and give further promise of an already bright and hopeful outlook.



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Gollock, Minna C
River, sand, and sun

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